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Les Toil

sept 2003

greg ginn
subhumans
turbonegro
cannibal corpse
rufio
the appleseed cast
tokyo rose
threats

dying fetus
glasseater
destruction made simple
elad love affair
stunt monkey
methadones
no warning

cobra high
bear vs. shark
a trunk full of dead bodies
the divorce
3rd grade teacher
assert

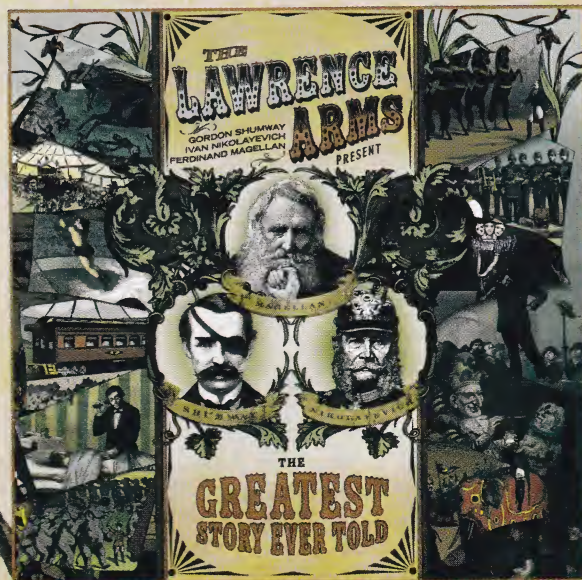
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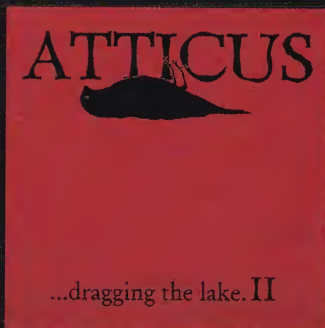
IN STORES SEPTEMBER 9TH



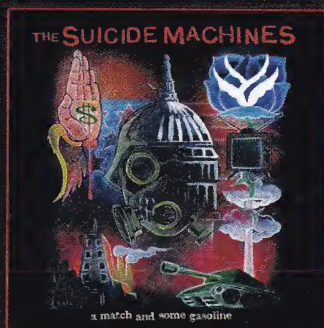
DVD



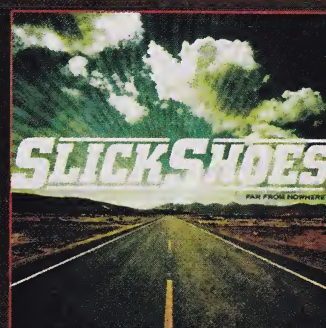
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2003 Compilation



Atticus
...dragging the lake. II



The Suicide Machines
A Match And Some Gasoline



Slick Shoes
Far From Nowhere

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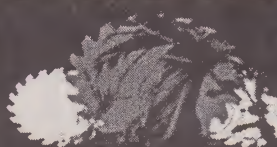
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FRI SEPT 19



HASTE

The Program

as i lay dying Cydne Raven * Yesterday's Rising

SUN SEPT 21

A Hope Unseen
A Futile Existence
R.A.T.S.
Pessimistic By Nature
De Collo
Broken Horizon
Shades of Black
A Lost Cause
Senseless Agression

FRI SEPT 26

Exalted
Out of Order
Forgotten Remnants
Finding Time
Radio Silence
The Zigguns
The Trace
2 Way Solitaire
Inspired 2 Die
With Broken Wings

WED SEPT 24



THE BRIEFS EPOXIES



SAT SEPT 27

LETTERKILL
Hot like A Robot
ESO
Broken February



SUN SEPT 28

Bleak December
The Enemy Within
Torn Within
Out of Angst
plus guests

THURS OCT 2



SUN OCT 5

Shauntclair
Useless Skums
Forever Mine
Reverse Halo
The Concrete Alarmists
Lasting Impression
Remember Me
Cuauhtemoc
Tomorrows Gone Forever
No Alliance
Rising From Ruin
The Vice Versa

TUE OCT 7

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FRI OCT 10

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Cacti Widders
Black Rose Phantoms
The Trenches

SAT OCT 11

Esoteric 7
Shoppo
DumbLuck
Natural Afrodisiac
Ghetto Brass

FRI OCT 17



↑eighteen Visions
TIME IN MALTA
SINABEACH
HOTWIRE FATE 13

SAT OCT 18

the
Vibrators
SWINDLE
ONE 21
Cell Block 5
The Loads



FRI OCT 24

THE METEORS

Oh Slenderin
plus special guests

SAT NOV 1

MENACE

MAD PARADE
plus special guests

FRI OCT 31

HARDCORE HALLOWEEN 2003
THROWDOWN
Bleeding Through
Donnybrook * Cold War

SAT NOV 8

Bloodletting In North America
FORGAS
Spawn of Posession
Severed Savior

FRI NOV 14

25
LOVE
Blood Stands Still
Plus Special Guests

SAT NOV 15

U.K. SUBS
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plus special guests

FRI NOV 28

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Endor - Amity
Wester
The Higher**

WED-SEP 17

INDIE ROCK \$10

**The Weakerthans
The Constantines - Roy**

FRI-SEP 19

POP PUNK \$10

**Name Taken
Bullets N' Octane
Watashi Wa
Kut You Up
Form of Rocket**

SAT-SEP 20

POP PUNK \$8

**Mind Driver
The Silence
The Deal
The Discarded
Megababe**

SUN-SEP 21

INDIE ROCK \$8

**Tora Tora Torrance
Living Science
Foundation
Plus Special Guests**

TUE-SEP 23

INDIE ROCK \$8

**Ch Ch Ch Ha Ha Ha
April Sixth
Plus Special Guests**

THU-SEP 25

PSYCHOBILLY \$8

**Horrorpops
The Ripmen
Dragstrip Demons
G-String**

SAT-SEP 27

HARDCORE \$8

**Curl Up and Die - Ectomy
Manniquin Piss - Murder My Love**

MON-SEP 29

INDIE ROCK \$8

**Violet Burning
Joy Electric
The Hideous Thieves
Gatsbys American Dream**

WED-OCT 1

PUNK \$8

**Greg Ginn
Jonny Homicide
Mike V and The Rats
1208 - The Machettes**

THU-OCT 2

INDIE ROCK \$8

**Jupiter Sunrise - Die Radio Die
Kind of Like Spitting - Karl Hendrix - Evan Levine**

FRI-OCT 3

SKA SKA SKA \$10

**Mu330
Suburban Legends
GoGo 13 - Tightspot**

SAT-OCT 4

INDIE ROCK \$10

**Plain White T's
Jamison Parker
The Matches
Halfway Home**

TUE-OCT 7

INDIE ROCK \$8

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Calibretto - Plus Special Guest**

THU-OCT 9

INDIE ROCK \$8

**Slow Coming Day
Nutwood - Palisade
Adam Misfortune
The Valley Arena**

FRI-OCT 10

INDIEPUNK \$10

**The Blood Brothers
Dance Disaster Movement
The Texas Chainsaw Choir
Radiation 4**

SAT-OCT 11

HARDCORE \$10

**As Hope Dies
Taken
Embrace Today
With Honor
Love is Red**

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THUR. SEPT 18

7-Burn Your Bridges
7:45-Holier Than Thou
8:30-Caustic Christ
9:15-Lack of Interest
10-B.A.T.
10:45-Municipal Waste

FRI. SEPT 19

6-Breaking Free
7-Blood For Lube
8-Admiral Angry
9-Under 7
10-My Dying Thoughts
11-Syngia

SAT. SEPT 20

6-Fozzy's Hero
7-The Get Go
8-Scarlett 23
9-Simply Lost
9:40-Jonathon Keyes
10:15-Scuba Kids
11-Forfit

SUN. SEPT 21

Battle Of The Bands
EVERY SUNDAY
7:15-Blackcradle
8-F-Zero
8:45-The Opponents
9:30-The Eddie
Garcia Band
10:15-Bright Life

MON. SEPT 22

ACOUSIC NITE
7:30-Rusticators
8:15-A Small December
in August
9-Nate Baldwin
9:45-Accident

WED. SEPT 24

7-Change of Fate
7:45-Samara
8:30-Fallen Angel
9:15-Already Dead
10-EMME

FRI. SEPT 26

6:30-The Annex
7:15-Bad Reactions
8-American Conflict
8:45-Walk The Line
9:30-The Fixtures
10:15-Onewordsolution
11-Frontline FCM

SAT. SEPT 27

6-S.T.A.B.
7-Persuasion Outline
8-neversick
9-The Gerry's
10-Pop Band Alice
11-The Nude

THUR. OCT 2

6:45-Campus
7:30-Subject 9
8:15-Ten Seconds
To Go
9-Fourhaven
10:30-Riddled With
Guilt

FRI. OCT 3

7-Luckdown
8-Madrepore
(AKA Idle)
9-48 Mananas
10-In Memory
11-Antimony

FRI. OCT 10

7-Six Chamber
8-Murder My Love
9-Jim Jones Brigade
10-EMME (Ember)
11-Winterdale Calls

SAT. OCT 11

6-Midnite Overture
7-Another Man's Trash
8-5 Under Par
9-The Scuba Kids
10-Anemic Dreams
11-Sine

SUN. OCT. 12

HARDCORE SHOW III
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Vendetta
Donny Brook
With Honor
Love Is Red
Embrace Today

SAT. OCT 18

6-Tyson
7-Luckdown
8-Simply Lost
9-Random
10-In Memory
11-Superpretendo

FRI. OCT 24

7-The Assaults
8-3rd Estate
9-The Grips
10-The Scuffs
11-American Conflict

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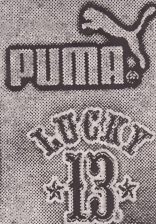
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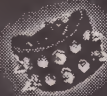
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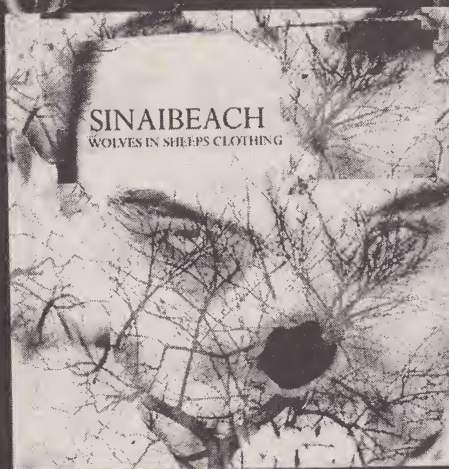
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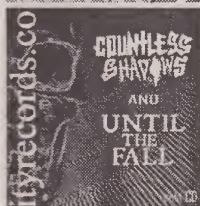
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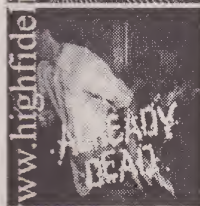
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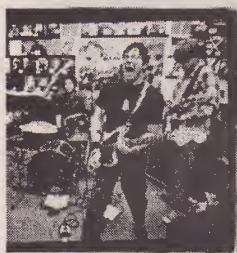
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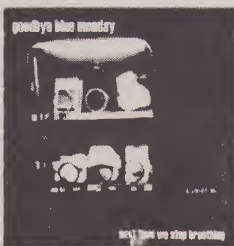
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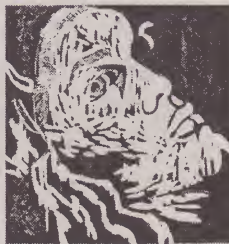
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JUST SAY JULIE



the world ending by Julie Fredericksen

A "Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice," wrote Robert Frost a long time ago. Hmmm. My money's on fire, what with this ozone-layer depletion and the weather seeming a lot hotter all the time. When the world ends, will we just suddenly ignite, like kindling? It's 9 a.m. and already so hot I've got the a/c blasting, so the idea of getting scorched to death isn't a foreign one. I'd rather not think about it. It seems like when I was a little kid, the threat of the world ending was everywhere. In school we'd have these earthquake drills (or maybe they were nuclear attack drills), where the alarm would blast and we'd get under our desks. All safe! Never mind the big windows right next to our desks, from which a flying glass shard could slice right through our seven-year-old selves. I enjoyed those drills. It was fun to be under the desk looking at all the dried chewing gum that was stuck there. But I was also getting a message: someday the world would end. That's what the teachers were telling us-and back then I thought teachers knew everything. I worried about the world ending a lot at that age. I'd seen the footage of those beautiful mushroom clouds and heard those scary alarm drills they'd do every once in a while. The radio and TV used to halt, and you'd be confronted with "This is a test of the Emergency Broadcast System." (You never hear those anymore. I guess we're on our own now.) It just confirmed the constant message from grown-ups: we're fucked. If we have a big Emergency Broadcast System in place, something REALLY bad is going to happen, we reasoned. That all got creepily confirmed when those planes crashed into the World Trade Center and abruptly brought all my end-of-the-world fears to the surface. I was no longer worried about my usual things: gravity fails us and the Earth gets pulled out of orbit and away from the sun and we all die; or the Earth's core

gets tired and stops spinning; or a huge asteroid slams into California, leaving just smoking rubble and silicone boobs lying around. No, suddenly I remembered that there are single-minded people not just intent on but passionate about destruction of life. So that kinda shook me up for a while. I seem to be back to my usual, shallow self-absorption now and don't feel as preoccupied. The world's end-oh, well. What am I supposed to do about it?

A worse thing would be the world only partially ending, leaving just enough water and plant life to sustain the people who are left to navigate the burned up, half-dead world that is left. I know in the movies this usually ends up working out pretty well: there's a study guy on a motorcycle sort of policing things and looking great in leather and lots of extras wearing tattered yet stylish outfits. Heavy metal plays on the soundtrack, and everybody ends up in a big showdown in the desert. Water is the new currency, and you can drive any car you happen to find and like-as long as there's gas. (I'm gonna boost me a vintage Bel Air convertible.) One of my favorite childhood movies-which is weird because it also scared me to death-was THE OMEGA MAN. The movie depicted the world after a nuclear blast, and Charles Heston is apparently the only man left alive because he had invented a special serum. At night he battles these ghoulish freaks who wear robes, have sores on their ashy faces, and worship a crazed leader who wants to take over the post-nuclear world. I always watched it nervously, feeling like I should be taking notes, like it was a documentary. Hook up generator in basement-check. Hoard water and canned food-check. Invent nuclear-safe serum-check.

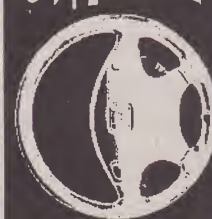
Of course, the Big Kahuna of end-of-the-world talk, the Holy Bible, never disappoints. In the last book of the Bible, Revelations (and I'm paraphrasing here, because I could never follow it), the end of the world comes on like a Jerry Bruckheimer movie with digitized effects: seven bad-ass horses or angels or something

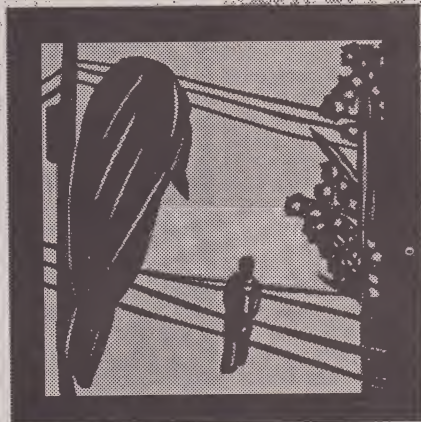


“ Note to self: make
'end of the world' mix
tape. ”

and bodies of water turning into blood and the sky splitting open and all living things burning up and mountains tumbling and trumpets blaring.... All we need is an Aerosmith power ballad to finish things up here. Well, that sort of apocalyptic talk can give a gal nightmares. Here's the way the world should end: We all, at exactly the same time, get some sort of memo. It's on Very Important Letterhead. "To Whom It May Concern: The world is tired and will end on blah blah at exactly 2 p.m." Good enough. We all know what to do. We don't bother making the bed. We gather up our favorite people and pets and we have a big party at a park. We eat dessert first. We gorge ourselves on grilled corn and marinated tri-tip. We reminisce about the past, we go swimming, we make out, we pet baby animals, we listen to our very favorite songs, we tell our favorite people why we love them-and when 2 p.m. arrives, we're outta here. No pain, just a giant On/Off switch that goes to Off. Note to self: make "end of the world" mix tape.

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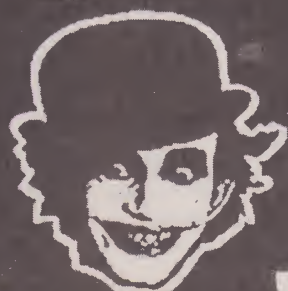
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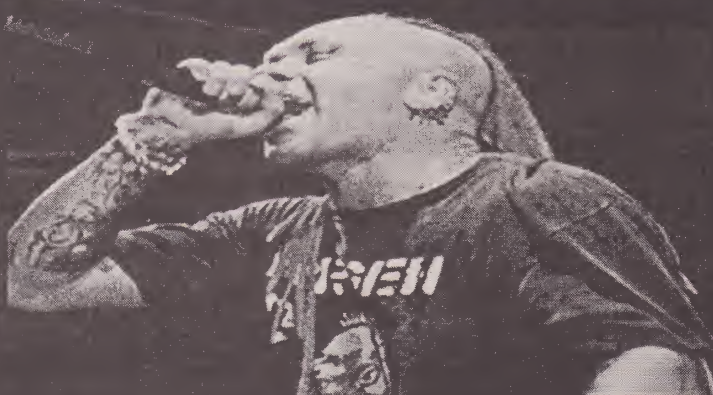
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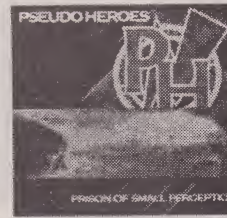
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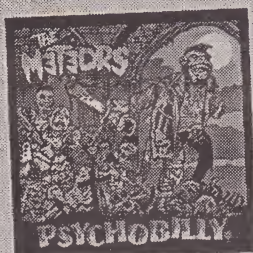


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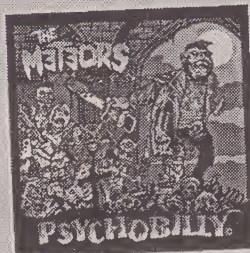


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WESLEY WILLIS 1963-2003

A statement from one of his biggest fans, Jello Biafra:

We lost Wesley Willis some time before 9PM Chicago time August 21, 2003. Word is he died peacefully. The likely cause may be heart failure. Wesley had been battling leukemia for close to a year.

No services are planned as of yet. There will probably be a memorial concert, or at least a gathering in his honor in Chicago in the near future.

Wesley will go down as one of the most unique songwriters and entertainment personalities in history. His music, lyrics, drawings, insight and the way he put them together are like no one else. Ever. There will never be another.

As I got to know Wesley, what really struck me was his sheer will power, his unrelenting drive to succeed and over come a horrifically poor background, child abuse, racism, chronic schizophrenia and obesity among other things. He was the most courageous person I have ever known.

Yet through it all he had such a deep, all-encompassing love of life. Little things, big things. He loved bus rides. He loved watching trains. He loved writing songs about how much he loved his friends. He loved travelling to new towns so he could headbutt new friends. Is there any band he saw that escaped being in their own song about how much he loved their show? He was so warm, so sweet, so giving. He could be a handful when he came to visit; but as soon as he left, we'd miss him immediately.

As his long time friend Dennis Cooper said, "No More Demons." The voices in Wesley's head can't yell at him and put him down any more.

Wes was deeply religious. He was afraid that if he died he would no longer get to go see bands play. If there is a hereafter I hope he's right up front as Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn, his beloved Otis Redding and his dear friend Bradley from Sublime "storm the stage" as the crowd "roars like a sea monster." All opening for Wesley, of course.

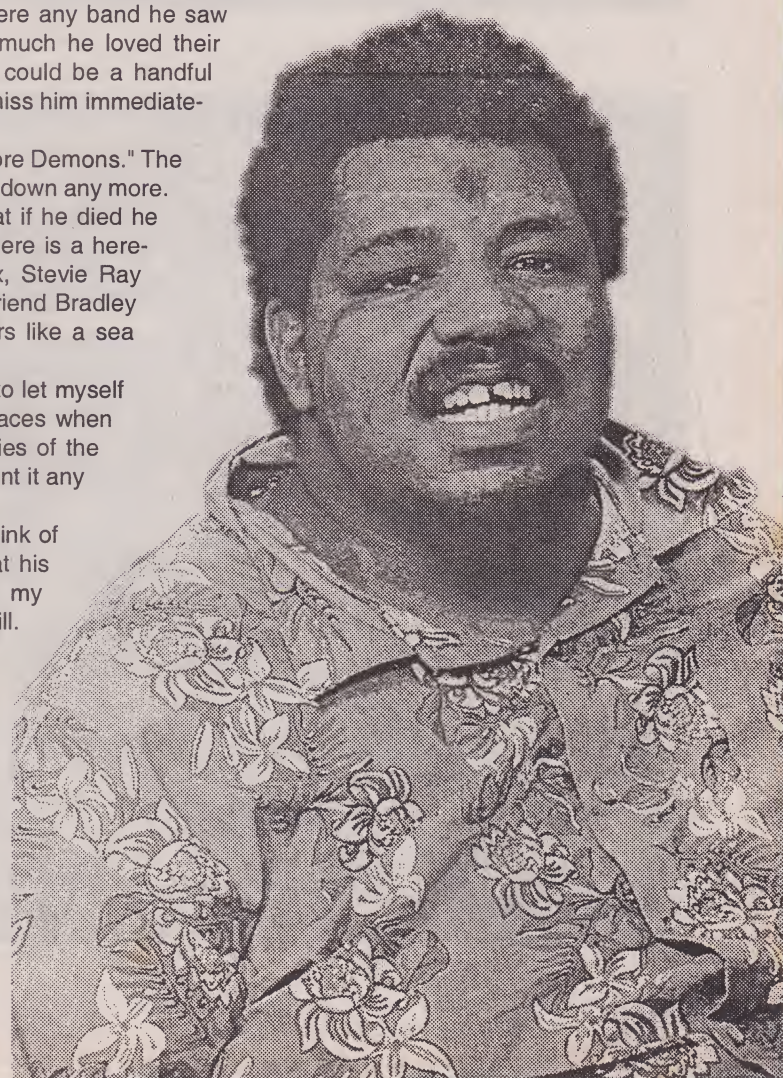
It will be hard now that he's gone, but I'm not going to let myself stop enjoying the funny stuff, or the look on people's faces when they first hear "Rock n Roll McDonald's," or the memories of the good times and Wesley's big adventures. He wouldn't want it any other way.

There are many down times when all I have to do is think of one of his songs, something he said or simply marvel at his Wesley-isms, and the clouds part and a smile comes to my face. I think he does that for a lot of people. He always will.

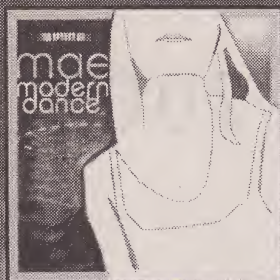
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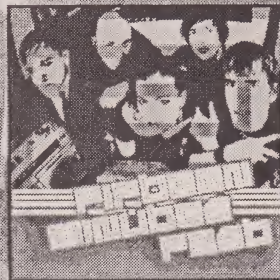


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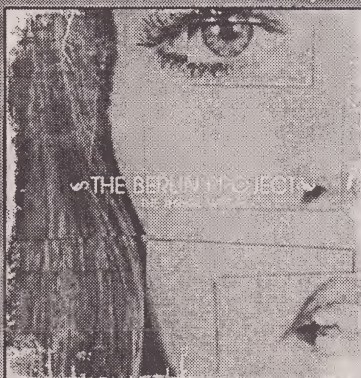
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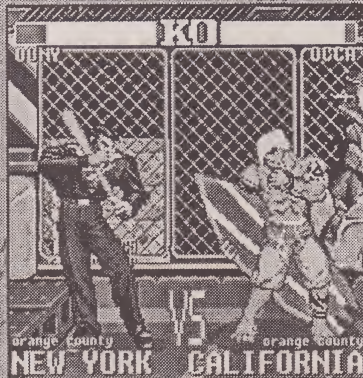
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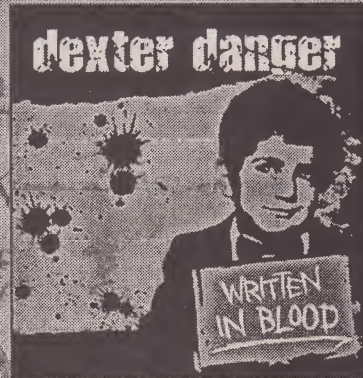


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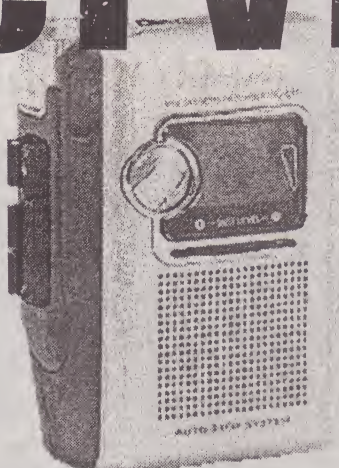
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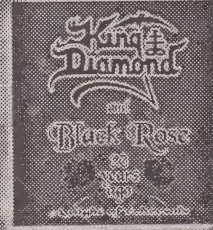
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GREG GINN

of

BLACK FLAG

GREG GINN
Interview by Marcia Taylor

When I heard a rumor about a Black Flag reunion, it seemed like a good idea to talk to Greg Ginn, the band's founder. Ginn met with me at SST Records, the label he has managed for many years, in downtown Long Beach. We talked about the label's latest releases, Ginn's involvement in rescuing homeless cats (an effort he and his wife make together), and the upcoming reunion show (yes, it's true: September 12 at the Palladium in Hollywood).

SKRATCH: Would you tell me about the upcoming Black Flag reunion show and how it came about?

GINN: Since Black Flag broke up—or since I decided not to do that any more (that was about 1997)—what with all the band reunions, I have been approached every year forever, but it's not been something I wanted to do. Black Flag (when it was going) practiced all the time. You can't just throw everyone together and have it be up to the standard I'd be interested in. However, an opportunity came in L.A. where if we played we could

make a lot of money. The only way that I would do that would be as a benefit show. Because we've gotten involved in cat rescue—we take them in and find homes for them—I decided to do the benefit in that way. I figured that if Goldenvoice was interested under those circumstances, I would do it. The people at Goldenvoice are positive about the idea, [and] the promoters in L.A. are real excited. Also, seeing so many good cat organizations, so many people who put the money to good use, working at the grassroots level with no bureaucracy, made me want to do it. And that's where we'll donate the money. We're going to do as good a job as we can and put as much time into it as we can. I'd like to put more time into it, but it looks like it will be in September.

SKRATCH: I read in a local publication about your cat rescue efforts, which I want to talk with you about. But first, can you tell me what you have been doing lately on the music front?

GINN: After quite a long hiatus, we [i.e., SST Records] have four new records coming out. We went through a rough period, with our distributor going bankrupt. Now we have good distributor. I play in all four of the bands. One is Fast Gato, a new band that I started. The vocalist is Scott Reynolds. Another band is Confront James. This will be the fourth album by them. The other two are instrumental groups: Mojack, with saxophonist Tony Atherton; and Hor, which is an electronic/regular instrument hybrid. We use lots of electronic samples on drums, guitar, and bass. This is also the fourth release for this group.

SKRATCH: It sounds like you spend a lot of time playing music.

GINN: I work during the day at SST, but I try to [play a lot of music]. If I'm not playing live, I'm jamming six nights a week. I play with a lot of people.

SKRATCH: Please tell me about the cat rescue work that you and your wife have gotten involved in, how it started and how long you've been doing it.

GINN: We started five or six years ago. It began with one of the dogs, Sugar Bear, just because we had the room. He was running the street, and we couldn't find the owner, so we kept him. Then we started taking in cats. I've always loved cats, but I moved around so much for so many years that I couldn't think of owning an animal. I had lots of cat collectibles, though! I've stopped doing that now that we have the real cats. I saw how homeless cats were living out there. Most don't live long. They get

parasites, diseases, injured (and then the injuries aren't taken care of)...It's a pretty cruel life. People think, "They'll catch a mouse," but it's not that easy. We take them in, put out flyers. I enjoy having them around; I like them. We're not set up as an organization, though. And the benefit show has nothing to do with our cats, but other organizations that are set up as non-profits and can take donations.

SKRATCH: I was struck when I saw you play the other night at the Liquid Den in Huntington Beach by the variety of music that your trio plays. In addition to the Black Flag material, you played a lot of blues-influenced guitar jams. What kind of music do you listen to?

GINN: I like playing. It's not like I play every style of music, but I like a lot of different kinds of music. With new music, I like a lot of electronica. I like older jazz rather than newer. There's a real good blues band called Café Rhythm & Blues that plays at the Blue Café. They might be playing tonight.

SKRATCH: The reason that I was so struck by your playing blues-influenced music is that I love that type of music. I grew up with it, pretty much started listening to music and buying records during the blue-eyed, white boy, British blues invasion of the late '60s and early '70s. It had so much soul and feeling to

SKRATCH: Yeah. It's the same with metal, too. There are all these insanely fast, technical guitar solos, but to me they have no heart.

GINN: I still think the best metal bands have a blues feel. The first Black Sabbath album is kind of a bludgeoning of blues. Deep Purple also started out as a blues band.

SKRATCH: Are there any guitar players you especially enjoy listening to or who have influenced your playing a lot?

GINN: I play bass, too, just as much as I play guitar. I don't think I'm particularly more influenced by guitar players than anything else. I probably like as many horn players. At this point, I've heard so much music...I don't really study any one [style]; I just mainly work on my music.

SKRATCH: Have you been doing many live shows recently?

GINN: I haven't for awhile, but recently I've done more. I wanted to play out before the benefit show, although I've always played consistently. I learned some Black Flag songs that I haven't played for awhile. I'm doing some shows locally, doing some Black Flag, but I plan to add new stuff.

SKRATCH: Will the four bands you play with and whose albums SST will be releasing tour?

GINN: Confront James, Mojack, and Hor will be playing out in the future, definitely. As far as touring, it depends on the time people have available. I'll definitely do a tour with the trio

vidual effort into trying to communicate. But even music that does [communicate], sometimes it fades away, too.

SKRATCH: I think so many of your lyrics are still so relevant today, like "TV Party". So much hasn't changed in our society; what you sang about still rings very true.

GINN: I'm sure the lyrics are part of it.

SKRATCH: Did you read Steven Blush's book, *AMERICAN HARDCORE*? He devoted more space to Black Flag than to any other band. If you did, what did you think of it?

GINN: I'm not that nostalgic. I've never seen any punk band reunions—although maybe I'd go if they were playing new music.

SKRATCH: There are people who are just very forward-looking, and maybe you're one of those.

GINN: Well, I listen to a lot of old music, too. No, I didn't read that book. There are several books out on punk history, but I haven't read any of them. I was there. So I don't feel I can comment on how what he says about Black Flag.

"People say this album, that song, that show seemed to have an impact beyond entertainment—which was our goal."

it. As much as I love punk, the one thing that disappointed me about punk was that, although it had anger and aggression, it seemed lacking in heart and soul. That's why I loved the Cadillac Tramps' first record. They were probably the first band I heard that played really fast but very bluesy.

GINN: I totally relate to what you're saying. To me, it still has to swing. There's not much music I'll listen to if it doesn't have pretty heavy swing. Rhythm is so important. I would say that's the kind of music I try to play. In punk rock, a lot of music is played straight, but it would have more power and feeling if it had swing.

under my name. [and also] hopefully [with] Hor and Confront James down the line. I look forward to touring.

SKRATCH: Do you have any ideas why Black Flag's music continues to be so popular with new generations of listeners?

GINN: I think that's something for others to judge, but not me. I enjoy playing it still. All I know is we put a lot of work into it and tried to play with as much intensity and feeling as possible. But beyond that...it's probably more for other people to say. However, I get a lot of feedback about it. People say this album, that song, that show seemed to have an impact beyond entertainment—which was our goal. You have to have a goal, otherwise it's just entertainment. Not that that's bad. It's good to have musicians who put indi-

SKRATCH: Okay, back to cats. If someone wants to get a cat, what's the best way to go about it?

GINN: Cats are easier to talk about than music! Adopt one from a shelter, PetSmart and Petco both have adoption programs. Or find a place nearby. Adopt one that's homeless; don't buy one at a pet store.





ZUBHUMANS

The Subhumans
By Jill King

You're 13, and you walk into the record store for the first time wanting to be birthed into the world of punk. There is an 80% chance that once you leave the record store you will be

hugging a copy of one of The Subhumans' albums, which you will continue to cherish even in your grave. But no worries: even though you might be dead, The Subhumans are nowhere near R.I.P.! The Subhumans have been together since way before I was born and have released over 12 albums. Their next album, *LIVE IN A DIVE* (Fat Wreck Chords), and their 2003 tour have again inspired 13-year-olds—and everyone else who continues to thrive on punk.

The Subhumans are:
Trotsky—drums
Bruce—guitar
Phil—bass
Dick—vocals

Although I was not fortunate enough to meet Dick and the rest of The Subhumans, I was honored to interview Dick via e-mail while The Subhumans were on tour.

SKRATCH: I heard that at the Roxy in Hollywood you guys played two dates with two different set lists. Is there a reason that you switch up the set lists?
DICK: We got a lot of songs, like 70 or so, and as we rarely tour, we try to play as many as we can—so we divided them up into three sets (of which the Roxy got two).

SKRATCH: At the Roxy show I heard that you guys played your 17-minute song "Cradle the Grave". Most bands do not play their longer songs. What inspired The Subhumans to

play it? Is that common for The Subhumans?

DICK: Well, people want to hear that one as much as others, so its length doesn't matter, really—except it takes up the space of four or five other songs. People are surprised that it can be done live, but, really, it's like playing four or five in a row without stopping!

SKRATCH: In your The Subhumans logo, the Ss used resemble those of the Nazi regime. Was that done intentionally (similar to how The Sex Pistols used Nazi-affiliated symbols as a form of rebellion)?

DICK: No, no, no! There was no "shock tactic" in using that "S"; it merely looked better/sharper/neater (because there's one at the front and one at the back) than the usual rounded "S". Hey, Kiss did it! Finding out that that was how the SS did it in Nazi Germany was depressing. But, really, it doesn't make us Nazis!

SKRATCH: What fused your hatred for people who fight at shows? Have you ever refused to continue playing because of fights?

DICK: Fighting at shows fused our hatred of fighting at shows.. To see three or four assholes ruin a gig for 300 other people was so fucked up! It wasn't just the violence, but the lack of a coordinated response to it from the rest of the crowd. Everyone was scared, and it's hard to respond to violence without being violent yourself—unless people used mass body weight and combined strength to push the assholes out

or isolate them.

We didn't have a lot of fighting at our gigs, but there've been times when a song has been stopped to point out the shit going on before it gets worse and hopefully to stop it altogether.

SKRATCH: Has the war affected your tour at all?

DICK: Not in any major way. Suddenly a bunch of antiwar songs from 15-20 years ago were horribly relevant ("Who's gonna fight in the third world war?" indeed). It was good to find out that the majority of people we met (even outside of the shows) were anti-Bush and sick of worrying about where it's all going to end up—the Patriot Act, the limited CNN-style reporting, and so on. Our fears of getting bottled off stage by flag-wearing rednecks were unfounded!

SKRATCH: How do you feel about Tony Blair supporting the war machine?

DICK: Well, I don't give much thought space to Blair generally, but I can relate to the feeling that, after all the post-Thatcher hope and relief derived from a fresh-faced young Labor leader, to see him slavishly follow the Bush doctrine (white man, give you freedom and democracy through bombs and cultural demolition) and to see him pretend to "understand" how 2 million demonstrators in London in February felt, and then totally ignore us...well, it just pisses you off! Again!

SKRATCH: What is your connection to Fat Wreck Chords?

DICK: Our "other" band, Citizen Fish, have their latest release on the Honest Don's label, and Fat will be putting out [our] *LIVE IN A DIVE* CD in the autumn. But the real connection is that us and Fat

Mike are 4,000-year-old punks. SKRATCH: People will often compare The Subhumans to Crass. What is your take on that? DICK: Okay! Crass were a big information/inspiration source at a time when punk was turning into new-wave chart music, and they gave everything a level of serious consideration that we'd not known before.

SKRATCH: You guys have split in the past for issues such as political disagreements. With all the political drama going on now, do you feel that there is any

tension or will be any future tension with bandmates? DICK: Er...no. We split not because of political politics but personal politics—which is the posh way of saying we disagreed on subjects like, "What shall we do next?" and "Is punk still as exciting as it used to be?" Our political outlooks are relatively along the same lines—i.e., Don't fuck with other people and they won't fuck with you, be aware, go by instinct.... I know that all sounds mushy, but from there all the fuck war/politicians are

power-crazed murderers/don't eat animals/etc....It just follows.

SKRATCH: You said once that The Subhumans will never reform. What happened?

DICK: We changed our minds! About 10 years later....the idea came up, and we followed it through to see what it felt like—and it felt good.

SKRATCH: Is it true that you only tour with one set of clothes?

DICK: NO! One other interviewer asked that question, and the answer was "NO!" then. This is how rumors start. If you really want to know, we take several different bits of clothing on tour—and some of them even get washed! Just because I wore a plaid Retina shirt for five years straight doesn't mean WHOOPS—you see? One exaggeration and my hopes of building up an

image of being a clean type get shattered!

SKRATCH: Do you still practice your "no-contract trust basis" when putting out bands on your record label Bluurg? If you do, has it caused any problems?

DICK: Part of the reason I don't release much nowadays is because bands started to WANT contracts—and subsequent MTV appearances, loads of money up front, etc.—and I can't/won't do that.

Check out The Subhumans new album out in autumn on Fat Wreck Chords.





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Turbonegro

Turbonegro
By Vinnie Apicella

They're tasteless, crude, and downright vulgar. They've sidestepped overexposure with indecent exposure and created one of the biggest stirs in the rock underground since the first wave of American punk. They've proudly pissed on popular culture and cough up controversy with childlike enthusiasm. They aimlessly amuse themselves by spreading darkness, fear, and both cheeks at anyone who doesn't get the joke. And yet anyone who's ever really listened to the music or seen the band play...well, there must be a point buried in there somewhere, right? They're Turbonegro, and they don't like your kids.

When an epic track like "The Age of Pamparius" comes blaring from their APOCALYPSE DUDES breakthrough or classics like "Get It On" or "Rock Against Ass" hook you, evidence shows there's plenty to sink yer teeth into. Turbonegro is an embodiment of sex, sailors, food fights, and F-words rolled into a bong-sized hash ball that's a never-ending toke into the mindless and mad rush of adrenaline that brings out the dirty dog in us all. And they make a statement like few others...not that either of the two band members previously interviewed were too anxious to reveal the inner workings of a cumulatively mad mind. So what? If it sounds good, who cares if it makes sense? After a well-aimed pelvic thrust through most of the '90s that culminated in their finest (APOCALYPSE) hour and five-year period of self-destruction, they rise again, bigger and better than before. Turbonegro is a self-deprecating slice of '70s showmanship and self-indulgence. They've released seven full-lengths, two EPs, and a live disc, and they've already had a remarkable 26-track tribute done for them (ALPHA MOTHERFUCKERS, which features some of the greatest indie rock, punk, and techno bands that ever existed). Now, after a lengthy recording layoff, they release the magnificent SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER, which follows a successful U.S. club tour (first opening for Q.O.T.S.A., then headlining)...and THIS after having played for hundreds of thousands of European festival fans on last year's comeback.

Prior to a recent show in April at the Bowery Ballroom in NYC's East Village, I had the perverse pleasure of meeting this under-the-radar, made-for-the-stage character act born of hard rock, punk, and comic relief. (Note: Due to technical difficulties taking place in the Ameritania Hotel bar, much of the shared banter between (guitarists) Rune Rebellion, Euroboy, and myself was lost in a blur of indecipherability. However,

I recently discovered that scattered at key points between spread particles, the tape does in fact yield enough information to make something out of almost nothing.)

SKRATCH: Why does the live show feature only material from your last two studio albums (ASS COBRA and APOCALYPSE DUDES)?

RUNE: It's partly because this line-up was basically when we started touring for ASS COBRA, and that's when it all kind of formed; so these are our songs.

SKRATCH: There's a huge difference in the sound between the ASS COBRA and APOCALYPSE DUDES albums, yet it's still undeniably Turbonegro.

RUNE: Part of the difference is in the change of line-up. Obviously, Euroboy came in and plays on APOCALYPSE DUDES, and then there's Chris Summers, who took over on drums.

SKRATCH: Do you set out to make a statement or get a reaction with your music?

RUNE: Not really. It's just about us making the records we want to make. But, of course, when we release a record, we do want to get some reaction. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Do you worry about cynics questioning your...judgment?

RUNE: Well, we give them something to talk about...but we don't like to explain things to anyone.

SKRATCH: Do you have any deeply rooted social or political sentiments you want people to know?

RUNE: Death-punk forever!

SKRATCH: Give me something on SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER, your first new studio album in five years.

RUNE: First of all, I'm really sure it's our best record. It's got all of those elements from our previous records, but it's just more mature and a more concentrated form of death punk.

EUROBOY: It's also the most focused and vital album we've ever done. I mean...what is the best album? That's a matter of taste. But I know that this album as a whole...it's a great band effort. The other albums have been a bit more...maybe separate, you know? APOCALYPSE was...I just feel like halfway through the recording we kind of broke the code and came up with our own musical identity. We started writing these really cool songs like "(Don't Say) Motherfucker, Motherfucker" and "Rendezvous with Anus" and "Back to Dungere High", and we came up with this really catchy and cool bubble-gum-like death-punk style, and on the new album that was our goal—to really expose that side of the band. We may lose a few of our fans of the old punk stuff because people only into punk are not always into what sounds...good, but they're more about something else. But we're probably going to get a lot of new fans as well.

SKRATCH: There are a lot of similarities between SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER and APOCALYPSE DUDES—which makes sense considering how much better the band sounds overall.

EUROBOY: It's important to remember that state-of-the-art punk rock these days stays underground. It's genuine lo-fi, all recorded live. We totally go against that. It's really well produced and a thoroughly-made album. It means we might lose the hipsters, but the music is still really good, and it's an album that's going to last for years and years.

SKRATCH: What are Turbonegro like live?



EUROBOY: I don't know. I've never seen myself like that, and I don't like to watch videos of our shows. I can feel that there's this certain magic going on when we play. There's a lot of euphoria going on stage, and then it makes sense to perform the songs.

SKRATCH: Why should people go see you guys?

EUROBOY: 'Cause we're good.

RUNE: 'Cause we're beautiful. [Laughs]
EUROBOY: We sound really good compared to a lot of new punk-rock bands, and we actually have a good, heavy live sound now. Musically it's good, and visually—from what I've heard—we're fantastic. A guy came up to me last night (from The Moving Targets), and he's an older dude, and they said it was like watching The Dead Boys.

SKRATCH: Why does Turbonegro "Hate the Kids"?

EUROBOY: 'Cause they suck. [Laughs].

SKRATCH: Seriously, that's one of my favorite songs.

RUNE: I don't think we've ever played that live. We've got so many songs now....

SKRATCH: What are you going to play from the new album?

RUNE: I don't know. We'll probably play one or two. [Writer's note: they did: "Sell Your Body to the Night".]

After our interview, the band headed downtown for the second of two sold-out shows at the Bowery Ballroom. The band ripped through their many

classics—true to form, sticking mainly to their two most recent albums. The band is alive and constantly in motion on stage, offering a colorful perspective for the fixed eye. Hank's stage presence is simultaneously charismatic and creepy. Adorned with a top hat, cane, and evil black eye makeup, he displays a sinister, Alice-like element in his freak-show persona. The show was phenomenal. No one left disappointed, Hank got a rose from a cute female fan, and they did "I Got Erection" for one encore and "Death Time" for another. On a memorable Monday night, darkness and denim reigned supreme.

Discography:

"Turboloid" 12" (Straitjacket Records 1990)
HOT CARS & SPENT CONTRACEPTIVES (Big Ball Records 1992)
HELTHER SKELTER (Repulsion Records 1993)
"Grunge Whore" 10" (SFTRI Records 1993)
NEVER IS FOREVER (Dog Job Records 1994)
ASS COBRA (Boomba Records 1996)
APOCALYPSE DUDES (Boomba Records 1998)
DARKNESS FOREVER (Live) (Bitzcore Records 1999)
SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER (Burning Heart Records 2003)

Websites: www.turbonegro.com,
www.turbojugend.net.



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CANNIBAL CORPSE

Cannibal Corpse
By Rich Balling
and Charlene Rogers

For over a decade, Cannibal Corpse has been making some of the most brutal and chaotic music ever released. They are the only death-metal band to appear on the BILLBOARD Top 200, be verbally berated by Bob Dole on CNN, and be banned or censored in multiple countries (such as Germany, where they are not allowed to play anything off of their first three albums). Cannibal Corpse continues to shred new light upon the genre and what it means to be metal.

The following interview, done over the phone with vocalist George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, offers an intimate look inside the world of this pioneering and controversial band. Beware: the zombies are close at hand. We hope you make it through alive.

SKRATCH: Cannibal Corpse has been around for over a decade now. Could you expand on what the death-metal scene was like when you were writing the songs for your first album? Aside from yourselves, whom else would you give credit for pioneering the genre? Who were you listening to at the time CC was born?

GEORGE: Well, I was not in the band for the first record, but back in 1987-88, Bay Area thrash metal was big. So were bands like Morbid Angel, Death, and Testament. It was a lot more fresh back then, but after the first couple Cannibal Corpse albums came out, labels tried to rush releases from bands that could

have waited a little while and done a few more demos. 1989-93 was when death metal started getting the most attention. It was a great time, but I think it's a lot better now. A lot more quality bands are out now...although I'm not sure how much faster and brutal it can get. I first started listening to Black Sabbath around 1978, then it was Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. Eventually, I moved on to bands like Death, Autopsy, and Morbid Angel. Chuck from Death is definitely the biggest influence for me vocally. I believe he has the greatest voice in death metal. The higher screams on our albums I attribute to Chuck.

SKRATCH: What is life like on the road? Has the controversy surrounding your band attracted protesters to your shows?

GEORGE: No protesting...although Bob Dole seemed to be interested enough to mention us on CNN. Our music is brutal, but there is no talk of politics or religion. You'd think that would keep us off of people's hit lists. We sing about zombies and stuff that was happening long before we were even around. Germany has been the biggest problem. They banned us from playing anything from the first three albums. Our fans get our lyrics. The people in charge of countries and the world don't know how to take things with a grain of salt. If they had a clue, they would figure out that these people could vote for them.

SKRATCH: Do you see the current uprising of a younger, less musically-intricate "hard-core" scene as something healthy allowing a new generation of music listeners to be exposed to harder, more aggressive music? or do you view the new breed of bands as watered-down versions of the music you helped define?

GEORGE: Bands like Hatebreed are great bands, if that is what you are referring to. Those bands might not play with as much technicality [as we do], but they still have a lot of energy. I love Judge, Bold, Gorilla Biscuits, Agnostic Front, Biohazard, The Cro-Mags, etc. Our guitarist shaved his head, and it's no big deal to have short hair...[but] that shouldn't be a requirement. Sure, there are a lot of bands that are supposedly metal that I would never consider being metal. Talk of metal coming back is ridiculous, because it never went away. I mean, what happened: did we lose it? FUCK OFF! It was always there, [but] people think it wasn't there because MTV wasn't covering it. Now [MTV] covers metal, and it's suddenly "coming back." These people do not understand the lifeblood of metal is the underground. That's where everyone came from.

SKRATCH: What is nu-metal?

GEORGE: Not metal. Metal to me is Judas fucking Priest.



SKRATCH: How does an entire country go about banning a band like CC? Do you get a letter in the mail saying, "Don't come here"?

GEORGE: Originally in Germany, a teacher saw a BUTCHERED AT BIRTH shirt being worn by a student at her school and started campaigning against us. Next thing you know we are backstage in Germany being asked to sign papers agreeing to not play anything off of our first three albums. So now we can't play "Mangled" there, but we can play "Dismembered" and "Molested". It makes no sense. We like to play at least two songs from every one of our albums. Kids come to other countries from Germany just so they can see the old songs. "Hammersmash

prejudice at all. There are, of course, people that will only listen to death metal and people that will only listen to black metal, but most of the time now those two crowds are meshed together. I mean, Dark Funeral and Pissing Razors shared a bus in the States. Pantera took Morbid Angel on tour (which was very good).

SKRATCH: Have you worked with a vocal coach to be able to add such a brutal texture to your voice?

GEORGE: I haven't had a vocal coach, but I don't sing from my throat like a lot of people: I push it up from my diaphragm. I never smoke pot or cigarettes, and I only drink room-temperature water before shows. If I'm sick, it can get hard, especially if my throat is raw from a consistent

band... I'm not sure anyone can relate to zombies.

SKRATCH: How much of a factor do you think your cover art, band name, and imagery plays in record sales past and present?

GEORGE: Sometimes it can hurt as well as help. On one hand, people can be too disgusted to even give the music a chance; on the other hand, the fans that are into us... the artwork and name probably contribute to part of the

"METAL TO ME S JUDAS FUCKING PRIEST"

Face" is probably our most popular song—and kids in some places can't hear it. It's stupid.

SKRATCH: Top three CDs for a desert island?

GEORGE: I would for sure bring Merciful Fate's DON'T BREAK THE OATH; and probably bring either SCREAM BLOODY GORE or LEPROSY by Death. It would be impossible to choose a third.

SKRATCH: Black metal coming out of Scandinavian countries seems to be attracting a healthy following in the U.S. in recent years. How is your brand of metal received in those countries (i.e., Norway, etc.)? Is there prejudice because you come from the States?

GEORGE: When we first went to Norway I was wondering if we'd get some heckling, but it turned out to be great! We've toured with and are friends with bands like Dark Funeral and Marduk, and there is no

cough. I normally don't do warm-ups. In small clubs in places like France, it can get hard to sing when everyone in the place is smoking. In Germany one time, a kid was standing right in front of me while we were playing and blowing his smoke right in my face, so I poured a bottle of water on him to put out the cigarette. It was really hard to keep from laughing.

SKRATCH: What would you say to a parent that disapproves of their child listening to your music?

GEORGE: Come to our show. Bring your kid and come to the show. We aren't jerks, we aren't bad people—just meet us. We aren't here to teach your kids—that's your job. Lyrics are secondary, anyway, to the music. My voice is just another instrument whether I'm singing about zombies or just humming a melody. People like lyrics sometimes because they can relate to them, but with

appeal. Bob Dole was obviously interested enough to talk about it on CNN. I know I'm always interested in seeing cover art. The bottom line, though, is that the music is what is most important. We don't think of album art in order to sell records.

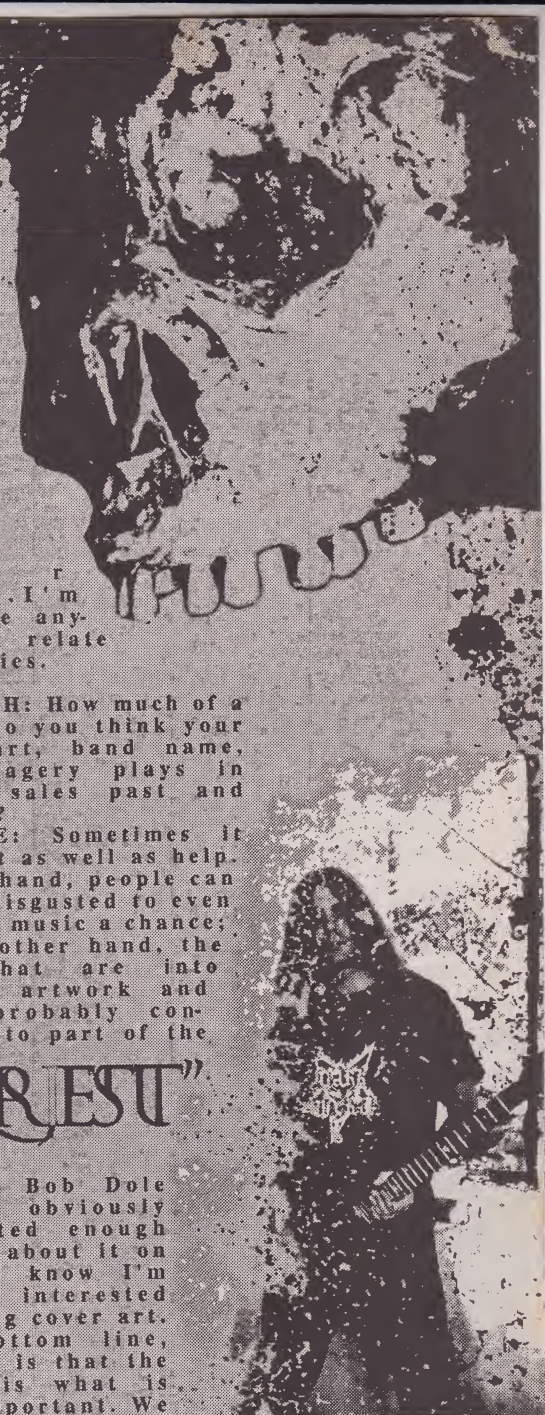
SKRATCH: Describe your band to someone who has never heard you before.

GEORGE: We are intense, often technical, and very brutal. We are a death-metal band.

SKRATCH: How has the band managed to stay around so long?

GEORGE: We are one of the more recognizable bands in death metal, and it's because of the fans. They are the reason we are here. We have the best fans.

www.cannibalcorpse.net



RUFIO

Rufio Interview by Dane Jackson
Photos by Wendy Hafen

Rufio is an example of one of those bands that comes out of nowhere and becomes extremely popular. It happened mainly through the Internet and without a push from a label. After leaving The Militia Group, Rufio signed to Nitro, where they started working on MCMLXXXV (that's 1985, for the Roman-numeral challenged). It was produced by Nick Raskulinecz, and it is arguably the band's most polished release to date.

Below, guitarist Clark Domae talks about everything from Van Halen to the movie *HOOK*...as well as some mentions about the new album and his band.



SKRATCH: Did you plan on confusing all your fans by using Roman numerals for the new album?

CLARK: [Laughs] Actually, no. We just did that because of the Van Halen record 1984. They did the exact same thing. We just wanted to make it as close to that as we could (as far as the reference goes).

SKRATCH: How have you guys changed as a band since your last album?

CLARK: I honestly believe that we've gotten a little more mature (as hard as that sounds, because we're really immature). As far as songwriting goes, I think it's not as poppy...[or] cheesy, I guess.

SKRATCH: Do you get offended when people call you a pop-punk band, then?

CLARK: No, because I think our old CD is seriously 100% punk-pop, so I understand why they say that. So it's okay, I don't care.

SKRATCH: What do you want to be called after this album?

CLARK: I don't know. I think everything's just "rock" these days because there are so many sub-genres, like punk, emo, whatever. It doesn't really matter to me.

SKRATCH: As far as the new record goes, what do fans have to look forward to?

CLARK: I think the vocals are better on this album than on the old one. And the music is a little more developed, and maybe more technical.

SKRATCH: Are you guys a little bit nervous since you're a week away from the release date?

CLARK: Yeah, I think so. It's weird, because it feels like it's not coming out yet. It hasn't really hit yet. So, I'm not really nervous, but then I am at the same time because I know it's

it got leaked, because we got fans on the Internet, you know? Like Napster, mp3.com....

SKRATCH: Are you happy with the switch to Nitro Records?

CLARK: I'm very happy, because they're a great label and great people [...].

SKRATCH: Plus, you've got Dexter.

CLARK: Exactly. He's a very nice guy, and he knows what he's doing. That's two pluses right there.

SKRATCH: Are you guys pretty fly for an Asian and three white guys?

CLARK: We're trying, but I don't think we are. We're just not hip. We're trying, though.

SKRATCH: What does Nitro have that Militia Group didn't?

CLARK: They have more experience, I guess, and they kind of have a bigger purse because they've been around longer and are a bigger label—which can help us.

SKRATCH: How many times do people ask you if your name is based on the Peter Pan movie with Robin Williams?

We're just not hip. We're trying, though.

leaked on the Internet already, so kids already kind of have it. I'm nervous on how the opening day's going to be.

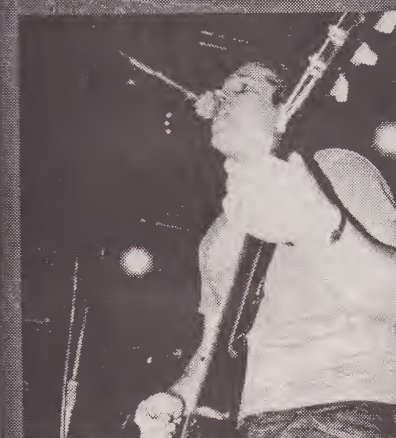
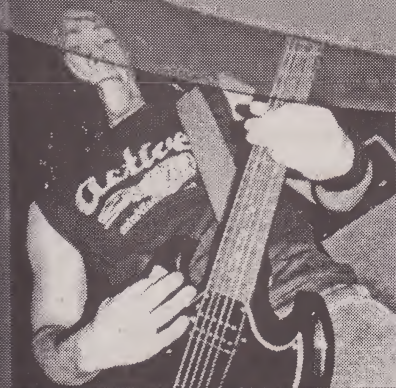
SKRATCH: Speaking of it already being leaked on the Internet, you've gained a lot of popularity because of file sharing, so how do you feel about it now?

CLARK: See, it's weird, because that's so true. I don't really care, but at the same time I want [a new release] to be a surprise. It's kind of bumming me about that because you want it to be a surprise, but it's not going to be now because so many kids have it. But still, we understand why

CLARK: You know, I think everybody in the whole world has asked us that, and we've been able to say "no" because it's kind of not, in a way; but then again, it still is.

SKRATCH: I'm not asking it; I just wanted to know how many people have asked it.
CLARK: A lot. Like, seriously, like 40 kids every show, probably.

SKRATCH: What does Dante Basco think of your band?



CLARK: That's funny you say that, because I know this girl [who] actually met Dante Basco at In N Out in Hollywood. Yeah, and she told him about our band, [and] he was totally into it. He wanted to go to a show and everything; he was totally down for it. I don't know. He gave her his autograph, and he was really cool, I guess.

SKRATCH: You got to meet him, then?

CLARK: No, it was my friend, and he signed it "Rufio." It was rad. I wasn't there, but I wish I was because he's down with our band because it's his character. That's kind of cool.

SKRATCH: Off the new album, what track are you looking forward to playing the most?

CLARK: Oooo, good question. There's a song called "We Exist" on there, and it's one of my favorites—I think because I like the music a lot. I like Scott's vocals on that song, too. It's just a really good song to me. That one's for me.

SKRATCH: What song means the most to you?

CLARK: Oh, wow, that's a toughie. Getting deep now, huh? You know, I don't know. Scott writes the lyrics, so I'm sure Scott has that answer like flat; but since I don't really write the lyrics, I don't really have that deep thought/meaning in the songs like he does.

SKRATCH: After the Warped Tour, what are you guys doing this summer?

CLARK: I think we're doing our own headlining tour, but that's going to be in late summer. We're still looking for bands for that tour, so we don't know who's playing with us yet.

SKRATCH: What kind of bands would you want to play with?

CLARK: I'd like a good combination of punk and slower stuff, just so it's blended well; a combination of genres, just to spice it up.

SKRATCH: Throw in a ska band.

CLARK: I wish. I would want a metal band, to be honest, a metal band as main support so that all the kids are pumped up—because it's metal and it's rad. But we're so not even close to metal [that] it might not blend well.

SKRATCH: Do you think you'd ever do an all-Nitro Records tour?

CLARK: I don't know, because I don't like how that would work. It'd be cool, I think; it'd be fun. We know all those bands really well, and we'd have a good time.

SKRATCH: If you could only pick a few other bands, what Nitro bands would you take?

CLARK: I would like Divit on the tour and Don't Look Down, for sure, because they're great bands to me. That's my choice.

SKRATCH: If you could wear only one pair of colored socks for the rest of your life, what color would you pick?

CLARK: I would choose black, because there's only one pair and they're gonna be dirty. I don't want white socks that look all brown and ugly. I'm going to take black, because you can't tell if they're dirty.

SKRATCH: If the people who read this only get one thing out of this interview, what do you want it to be?

CLARK: I don't know. Everybody buy our record next week. [Laughs] Is that wrong to plug yourself on the last question?

SKRATCH: Oh, that was the second to last question. You've got one more.

CLARK: Oh, because it was set up like a last question, so I thought it was. Alright, go on.

SKRATCH: No, it was the set-up to the last question.

CLARK: That's what it is. I knew it was setting up something.

SKRATCH: Are you ready for the last question now?

CLARK: Yeah, I'm ready. Wait. [Pause] Okay, now I'm ready.

SKRATCH: The last question is: Do you have any last words?

CLARK: [Laughs] Do I have any last words? See, I'm never good at these, because I'm more of a sporadic kind of guy, like an at-the-moment kind of guy; and if I have to think of something, it doesn't work. Hmmm. I'm sorry, I don't have any last words. Goodbye. Thank you. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Go to the Website, buy your album, go see you on tour...?

CLARK: Yeah, and thanks. Those are my brilliant, genius last words.

For more information on Rufio, check www.RufioMusic.com



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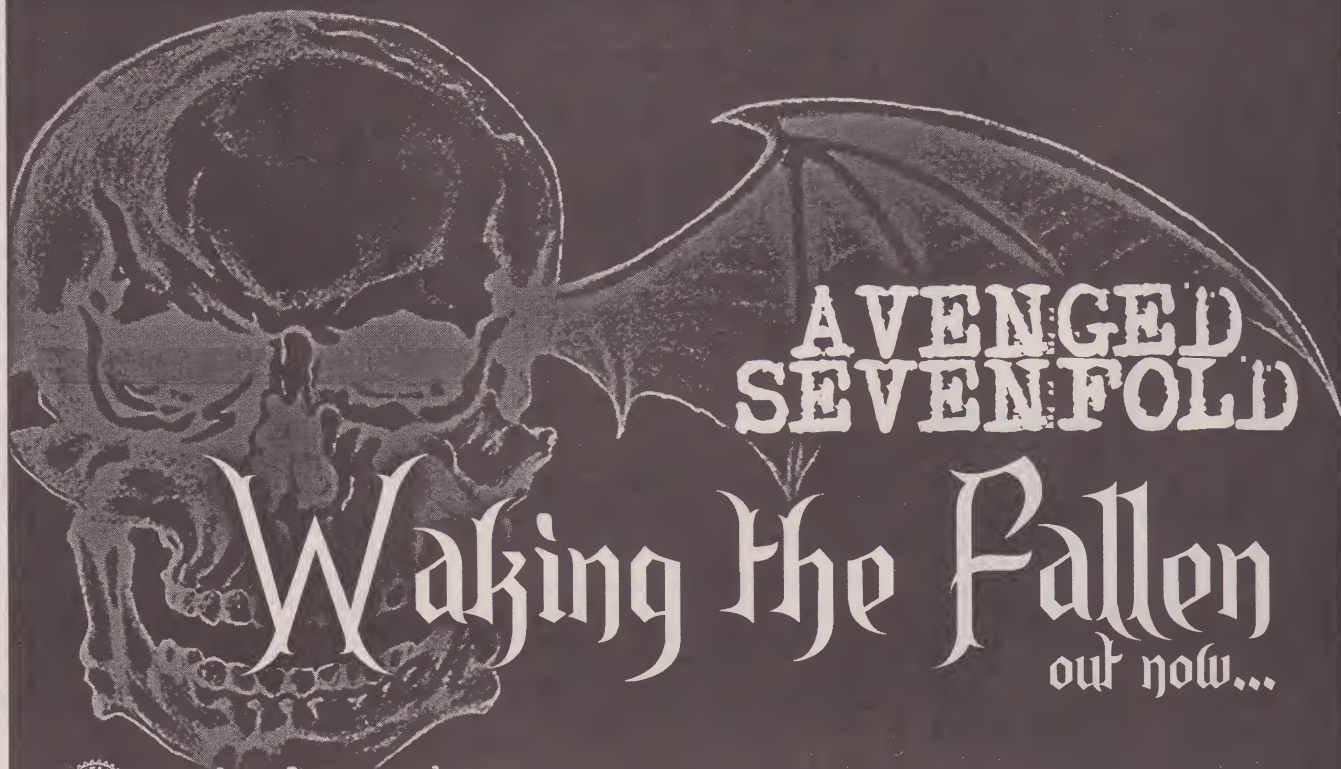
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THE APPLESEED CAST

The Appleseed Cast
By Rich Balling and Charlene Rogers
Photo by Shelly Horst

There are artists, and then there is everybody else. The Appleseed Cast have been creating art through music since 1997, when they began in Los Angeles. One year later, Lawrence, KS, seemed to be the proper place for the band to lay out their canvas and begin creating what would eventually be four full-length CDs with indie icon producer Ed Rose (The Getup Kids, Coalesce). Two of those four releases are the now-infamous LOW LEVEL OWL sessions, VOLUMES ONE and TWO, which are most certainly in the record collection of any devout elitist and lover of great music. Back with a new label (Tigerstyle) and a new CD (TWO CONVERSATIONS), The Appleseed Cast continue to lure fans with their unique swirl of brooding and blister. Art, integrity, and pushing the envelope of the stagnant radio market are what defines this band. To all those who lack musical integrity, a warning: upon reading this interview, you just might learn something.

"Music is powerful stuff, It moves me and you. It dictates how my life is."

SKRATCH: Define "artist."

AARON: I suppose it's a person who uses their creativity in daily life, whether it be by making espresso or bad hair metal.

SKRATCH: If you woke up tomorrow and no one could speak, what would you do? What implications might that bring to music? Would more people take up music to express themselves? Why?

AARON: [...] It certainly would eliminate a lot of useless chit-chat. Music is powerful stuff [...] It moves me and you. It dictates how my life is. I don't know.... If I couldn't speak, I think it wouldn't change my life much. I wouldn't be able to sing really awfully along to Blink songs in my car, though.

SKRATCH: About five years ago, I recall falling asleep every night listening to December's Tragic Drive. What can you tell me about that?

AARON: That was the first incarnation of The Appleseed Cast. We changed that name when we signed to Deep Elm. We still have a box of those demos somewhere.

SKRATCH: What sparked the move to Tigerstyle?

AARON: Being done with our [prior] contract, we checked what was out there and felt that a move was the right thing for us, and Tigerstyle seemed like a good home for us for a while.

SKRATCH: This might seem a bit lofty to you, but please humor us. We consider the Low Level Owl Volumes the "indie" equivalent to Radiohead's OK COMPUTER—not in style, of course, but in inventive magnitude, envelope-pushing, great production, and nearly perfect songwriting. Could you outline the writing process for those sessions and tell us what sparked the idea to release Volume 2 with the extras and loops, etc.?

AARON: Well, we went in with about nine songs and the idea of stretching those songs as much as we could to have two non-stop, hour-long records. This was a lot harder than we thought. Just matching up the key of the songs and the tunings and making it flow in mixing was tough. But Ed Rose really came through there. I think it's why he uses Pro Tools now, flipping eight 2" tapes every five minutes will drive anyone crazy.

SKRATCH: What other bands are playing now that you recommend our readers go check out?

AARON: Ilya is something I just checked out, and they were great. I have this Ben Gibbard and Andrew Kenny split EP that is amazing, as well. [And] the new American Analog Set.

SKRATCH: What would you say are the differences on the new record, TWO CONVERSATIONS, compared to your previous releases?

AARON: Restraint, focus...It's a bit simpler, I guess, but Chris really made the story and lyrics the record instead of noise. The storyline is much more "out there" than anything we've done before.

SKRATCH: Top three CDs for a desert island?

AARON: I hate [this question], but how about Low's I COULD LIVE IN HOPE, Jawbreaker's DEAR YOU, and Depeche Mode's BLACK CELEBRATION.

SKRATCH: You have been hired to give a "state of the union" address to music fans regarding both the current and future status of the music industry. Can you give us a short summary of the main message within this address?

AARON: I guess I would let people know that they can make great records at home without spending a lot of money. Computers have changed the way music is made.

SKRATCH: How do you spend your travel time on tour?

AARON: [Being] a bookworm, working on my golf swing, sleeping, [getting a] coffee buzz, chain smoking, beer guzzling, trying to bug Marc and make out with Crisici.

SKRATCH: How difficult is it to use words to describe emotions?

AARON: Since I'm not good with that, I play guitar, paint, write sappy songs.... My girlfriend knows I'm sad or happy by what I'm playing. It's a better outlet for me than talking about it.

Catch The Appleseed Cast on an extensive tour to support TWO CONVERSATIONS. Visit www.theappleseedcast.com for more information.

TOKYO ROSE

TOKYO ROSE
By Don Sill

As odd as it may seem, not one member of New Jersey's Tokyo Rose is an original member. Since its first incarnation in 2001, the band has undergone numerous line-up changes and has evolved into a completely new band with new songs and a new sound...while holding on to the same old name. Tokyo Rose—whose current line-up includes Ryan Dominguez, Chris Poulsen, Greg Doran, and Jon Smith—are stoked about the release of their SideCho Records debut, *REINVENTING A LOST ART*. The album draws from the usual emo subject matter—heartbreak, failed relationships, friendships, and loyalty—with music that combines those adolescent growing pains with infectious melodies, catchy rhythms, and poignant lyrics. While songs of heartbreak may not be anything particularly groundbreaking, Tokyo Rose does manage a few new spins. Dominguez wrote the first single, "Saturday, Everyday", while in college thinking about what would happen after graduation. The upbeat pop-rock anthem is about his transition into manhood and the struggle with the long work week that lies ahead. The lyrics say it all: "So when we rule the world, we'll put it up to a vote, yeah / To make another day, one more like Saturday, so we can stay late / All those in favor of cutting the work week short, raise your hand and say, 'Yeah!'"

SKRATCH: Dude, I went to log on to your Website at toktorose.com.
DOMINGUEZ: [Laughs] Oh no...

SKRATCH: Yeah, and I got this steamy hot Japanese porn. It was awesome!
DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, that's the story we get told quite often. [Laughs] It's pretty funny.

SKRATCH: So that's not you guys?
DOMINGUEZ: Unfortunately not.

SKRATCH: Then I went to toktorose.net and saw you guys, and everything was regular.
DOMINGUEZ: Right. [Laughs] That's us.

SKRATCH: Now, you guys came up within the New Jersey rock scene. Tell me about that. How is the Jersey scene these days?
DOMINGUEZ: The scene there is always vibrant. The underground scene is wild, and there are always groups of kids putting on shows in halls and trying to get bigger places and stuff. Now, as we've progressed, New Jersey has become like a "pay to play" kind of place, and there's a lot of bigger venues that are charging bands...well, not charging them admission to play, so to speak, but [the bands] have to sell a

certain amount of tickets to play shows with bigger bands.

SKRATCH: That's just keeping the small man down, man.
DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, that's what I'm thinking. But that's how you gotta do it, I guess.

SKRATCH: It gets like that, I think, with every scene: kids gotta work their balls off to get stage time.
DOMINGUEZ: Yeah. There are a lot of great new bands coming up, you know. There's always been a lot of talent in New Jersey. Luckily for us a lot of attention has come to Jersey, and a lot of great artists have come from here, as well.

SKRATCH: Well, good things have been happening for you guys recently.
DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, man. We're stoked.

SKRATCH: What inspired your band name? Where did it come from?
DOMINGUEZ: It's kind of a weird story. See, all of the members that are in the band now weren't in the band when the band was originally formed or originally named. But it came about when a former member was in a class with a pretty girl and he was trying to get some play or whatever. He noticed that in her notebook she was studying for a U.S. history class, and one of the things she needed to know for her test was Tokyo Rose. I guess he thought it was a really cool name, and that's how we got it.

SKRATCH: So you're the only original member in the band?

DOMINGUEZ: Actually, I'm not even an original member. There were four guys before I joined the band. [...] In the summer

of my freshman year [in college] I decided to join the band. Then they dropped a couple of members, then picked up a couple new members, and we just started playing my tunes, stuff I'd written in the past. That's how it happened. Then we started playing every weekend, and it just took off.

SKRATCH: No original members? That's awesome!
DOMINGUEZ: [Laughs]

SKRATCH: And you kept the moniker "Tokyo Rose."
DOMINGUEZ: Yeah. We liked it, so....

SKRATCH: Your debut album, *REINVENTING A LOST ART*, just dropped. You guys must be ecstatic about that.
DOMINGUEZ: Oh, definitely. I mean, we've been working really hard to make the album and push it on our own independently. And then SideCho was interested, and they're great guys, and we formed a really good relationship with them—and they were able to put it out for us. They're making it happen for us, and that's really cool.

SKRATCH: How would you describe this album as a whole?
DOMINGUEZ: Well, it draws a lot from a early adulthood experiences like heartbreak, failed relationships, successful relationships, and stuff like that. A lot of the stuff is old material, but we're still really proud of it. We wanted to put the best stuff we had on this CD, and I think that we succeeded in doing that. I mean, we worked with a really great producer, Chris Badami, and he really brought out the best parts of this band. I think that everybody is very happy with this album.



SKRATCH: Now, you mentioned that a lot of these songs are older songs. So I imagine that you guys are working on newer stuff?

DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, definitely. As musicians and as writers, we have to keep progressing and keep on drawing on what's in our lives now. I feel like the older we get, [the more] we progress [...] We get more mature and better with age.

SKRATCH: So what are some of the things that inspire you now a days?

DOMINGUEZ: I write best when I am caught up in the emotion I am writing from. Regardless if I'm happy or if I'm angry, it just comes right out from there.

SKRATCH: The first single is "Saturday, Everyday". Good tune, very catchy. Tell me a little bit about that track.

DOMINGUEZ: I was still in college when I wrote that track. That song is about me dreading going into the real world and becoming part of the workforce and losing my identity to become part of the machine

DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, man, the kids are really great. Everybody's really supportive and really enjoying it.

SKRATCH: Any pre-show rituals or anything like that?

DOMINGUEZ: Well, with all these line-up changes, it's hard. But one thing we do before shows is we all make

"WE SORT OF BREAK EACH OTHER DOWN SO WE REMEMBER WHERE WE CAME FROM AND WHO WE ARE..."

DOMINGUEZ: Well, now I'm 21 going on 22, and I draw a lot on experiences like failed relationships and successful relationships; and also I try and draw from parts of society that I see. I just want to speak out on things that effect me.

SKRATCH: When is the best time for you to write?

and having to sacrifice my individuality in order to succeed. So the song is about me having more time in the week or more time in the day to express myself the way I want to.

SKRATCH: You guys have been touring recently. How have audiences been reacting to Tokyo Rose?

DOMINGUEZ: I think it's been really good. We've been on three East Coast tours, and we've been out to the Midwest once, and we did do one full U.S. tour in January. It seems that people are very receptive to this kind of music right now, and it seems like if you're gonna jump on the bandwagon...not saying that we have...but, if this is the kind of music that moves you, then there're a lot of people who are into it.

SKRATCH: So you're getting a solid reaction?

fun of each other. This way we don't take ourselves too seriously. [Laughs] There are a lot of bands that take themselves too seriously and build themselves up to be more then they actually are before they get on stage, and we sort of break each other down so we remember where we came from and who we are.

SKRATCH: To keep yourself grounded and what not.

DOMINGUEZ: Yeah, exactly.

SKRATCH: What are the ultimate goals for Tokyo Rose at this point?

DOMINGUEZ: The ultimate goal at this point is to spread our music, and hopefully it causes some impact—hopefully all positive—and spread it to as many people as possible. I mean, having our CD in stores is great, but touring and playing live in front of people and seeing the emotions directly in front of us is just the number-one goal.



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Threats
By Sarah Laidlaw

A product of 1980s Scotland, Threats creates a fast, driving, raw punk sound inspired by original punk rockers such as The Sex Pistols and The Clash. Threats describe themselves as a bunch of drunken friends having a laugh more than being a band—but their music belies that estimation. The band's members have been in the punk-rock music scene since it started, and this is evident in their sound and motivations.

Gogsy and Jim (the two original members) described to me via e-mail their thoughts about their band and music in general.

SKRATCH: How has the music scene in Scotland changed over the years that you have been playing?

GOGSY: When we started out playing in 1978-'79 the first wave of punk was in full flow, and it got a hold of us by the neck. Bands like The Sex Pistols, The Jam, The Clash, Adverts, Eater, and plenty of unknown bands inspired us. By the time we got our band sorted out, the music had started to change into the second wave of punk, which was faster, with more distortion and more shouting. The music kept progressing and eventually turned into mainstream stuff.

SKRATCH: Describe your hometown and its music scene today.

GOGSY: We all live in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital. The music scene here is pretty poor at the moment, but it's getting better. There is a developing interest in the new order of what the media has labeled punk, which includes Blink 182 and Good Charlotte. In my mind this is not punk, but it deserves recognition and its own identity, because kids are reacting to it as we did to the first wave in 1977. I think punk is all about independence and rebellion, and this new stuff is not that. However, its success does help us, because we can use the popularity of "punk" to expose our music.

SKRATCH: How did Threats form?

GOGSY: Jim and I have lived next door since we were born. We were always into loud guitar music. And so when The Sex Pistols started to release their material, BANG, we were having some of that! By 15-16 years old we were ready to start playing in a band. Jim's dad always had guitars around the house, and I got a drum kit for Xmas. We moved around on different instruments and went through a lot of member changes over the years. Jim and I are the only original members now [left].

SKRATCH: Threats broke up for a long time. What inspired your reunion in 1996?

JIM: I kept getting asked to do gigs, but I never thought anybody would like it. I finally did one, and it was great. I always missed playing those songs live because I fucking love them. They make me want to jump up and down and roar my head off. The songs were my inspiration. I ended up calling Gogsy back into the band, and we played with Dave Threat and Davey Metal (who had played with me in bands before).

SKRATCH: What drives you to still play after all these years?

GOGSY: For me it's a realization that life is far too short not to enjoy something that brings so much joy and happiness.

JIM: Gogsy's right that life is far too short. I never lost the hunger to play. It's just something that's built into me and won't go away. Also, the fact that I hear people say reformed '80s punk bands are mostly shit really motivates me, because we're NOT!

SKRATCH: How did you occupy your time during Threats 14-year break-up?

GOGSY: When Threats split up in 1982, I started to play guitar with our drummer's cousin in the new wave of British heavy metal that was starting at that time. That lasted until 1991, when I concentrated on my family and working as an electrical engineer. From 1991 until 2002 (when I rejoined Threats), the only music I played was a side drum in a bagpipe band.

JIM: I spent my time jamming and rehearsing with bands that never got off

the ground. I also got



married, divorced, had a son, and worked as a carpenter.

SKRATCH: How has your music evolved since 1977?

GOGSY: It hasn't changed that much in structure. I think we are just better at playing now.

SKRATCH: Where is your favourite place to play?

GOGSY: It would have to be one of three places: CBGB in New York; and (from back in the '80s) the 100 Club in London because these places are like the home of our music. The third place is Sidebar Tavern in Baltimore, because those people know how to enjoy themselves. It's only a wee pub, but people dive off the bar and off anything they can get onto.

SKRATCH: What message do you want your music to send people?

GOGSY: We hope our songs make people feel good, whether that be aggressive, mad, happy, or whatever. We hope that they are something people can sing along to and something that makes them want to come to our shows.

SKRATCH: What are you listening to right now?

GOGSY: The original mix of the first Anti-Nowhere League album. Nowadays, you just would not release something like that. It was originally produced to shock, and it does its job—which is why I think most people today would turn against some of its lyric content.

JIM: I've got a pile of CDs and vinyl I'm listening to. It includes 999; The Lurkers; Exploited; Metallica; the first two New York Dolls albums; and my friends' band, Battalion of Flies.

SKRATCH: What is your favorite thing to do on stage?

GOGSY: I like to pace every step of the stage so that I know I have stood where someone I admire and respect has played. I did it at the 100 Club, and I did it at CBGB. Now I know I have stood where all my heroes have stood.

JIM: Play some Threats songs and sweat like fuck!

SKRATCH: How long do you plan for Threats to keep playing? Do you have any specific plans for the future of Threats?

GOGSY: I would definitely like to do another album. I want to prove to myself that there are still another 12 tracks in me. I reckon that as long as there is a demand for what we do, we'll do it. I definitely enjoy playing and want to keep going.

JIM: I want us to do this until we can't do it anymore. I'd also like to do another album, but if it doesn't happen, continuing to gig would be enough for me!

Threats tour the U.S. almost every year. This year, their tour starts in Los Angeles on July 4. For CDs, other tour dates, and more about Threats, go to or www.drstrange.com.

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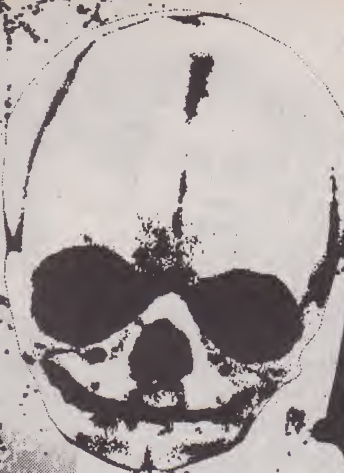
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DYING FETUS

DYING FETUS
BY MIKE SOS

Dying Fetus has been playing in the underground metal scene for over 10 years, bringing its version of hardcore-infused death metal worldwide. Despite member changes and the usual obstacles that underground metal bands must navigate,

Dying Fetus rolls with the punches and has continued to push the envelope. The questions below, answered via e-mail by drummer Erik Sayenga, cover the band's past, the current tour, and their latest album on Relapse, the brutal STOP AT NOTHING.

SKRATCH: How is STOP AT NOTHING different from previous DF releases?

ERIK: I would say it's a step forward musically. It does have all of the elements from all past albums, but the band has progressed as a whole. In all, I would say it's a little more brutal and intricate at times. For example, we do the extreme blast, which has never been done before in DF.

SKRATCH: How does the current band line-up compare to previous incarnations?

ERIK: Being the new drummer, I have always been a fan of the band before; and I did play with them back in '96. But by looking [from the] outside as a "fan" of the band as well, as a member I think it definitely all fits together as well as the old line-up did—and hopefully people will agree. But, naturally,

with new members come different influences and backgrounds, which I feel is definitely incorporated in the sound a bit.

SKRATCH: Which song was easiest to record? toughest? came out the best?

ERIK: For me, "Schematics" and "Vengeance Unleashed" were the easiest to record, as we had more time to practice. [In contrast], "Abandon All Hope" was written literally right before we entered the studio! I think they all came out pretty good; but, being a musician, [I feel] there's always room for improvement for the next album.

SKRATCH: What's the hardest thing about being in a death-metal band?

ERIK: Having to work a full-time job when not touring, driving two hours each way to practice (two-three times a week) and sweating your ass off. But it's all worth it just to be able to get on stage and jam out.

"Things seem to be gradually getting heavier and more accepted. I think the scene is really kicking right now."

SKRATCH: What are some of your musical influences? Any surprising ones?

ERIK: A lot of my favorite drummers are Gene Hoglan, Nick Barker, Dave Lombardo, Derek Roddy, etc. The band is influenced by everything from Suffocation, Baphomet, Cannibal Corpse, to a lot of hardcore.

SKRATCH: How do you feel about the current state of metal music? of the underground scene?

ERIK: I am happy with it right now. I think it is getting better, because a

year ago you couldn't see videos from Hate Eternal, Kataklysm, etc., on MTV. Things seem to be gradually getting heavier and more accepted. I think the scene is really kicking right now—from CA to NY to everywhere in Europe.

SKRATCH: What are you currently listening to?

ERIK: I still jam a lot of the old-school stuff, like Massacre, Death, Exhorder, Carcass...but I am really into a few bands from Europe right now: Old Mans Child, Pyaemia, and the new Sinister.

SKRATCH: What advice would you give an aspiring musician?

ERIK: Just practice and practice, and never stop no matter what gets in your way. It will not come easy trying to play death metal, but the only way I found [to succeed] is to suffer for what you want until you get it.

SKRATCH: What can we expect in 2003 from DF?

ERIK: Lots of touring, and hopefully we will get started on the new record or an EP soon.

SKRATCH: "When I'm not in DF, I'm..."?

ERIK: Slaving like everyone else to pay the bills! Other than that, we just chill a lot and jam our asses off!

SKRATCH: Any parting words?

ERIK: Thanks for supporting the death-metal scene! Stay brutal!



GLASSEATER
By Don Sill

After five years of dues-paying, Glasseater have reached the next big step in their career. They recently signed to Victory Records (home of Taking Back Sunday, The Reunion Show, and Snapcase), and they couldn't be more psyched for the release of their highly-anticipated Victory debut, **EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU DON'T LOOK DOWN**. The album is loaded with hard-rocking tracks that mesh elements of pop-punk and hardcore with metal riffs. Standout tracks include "Art of Communication", "Greetings...Goodbye", "At Your Own Risk", and "To Feel Adored" (which is about everyday trials and tribulations). The title track was written to express the importance of thinking outside the box, questioning the status quo, and forming individual opinions in order to lead a more fulfilling life.

These Miami-based emo/punkers (Julio Martin, J.C. Lopez, Anthony Lopez, Ariel Arro, and Nathan VanDame) are currently out touring with labelmates Bayside. 22-year old bassist Anthony Lopez talks with SKRATCH (just after they kicked off the tour in New Jersey) about the new album, touring...and **AMERICAN IDOL**?

SKRATCH: How has Victory been treating you guys so far?

LOPEZ: Great. They're working really hard for us. I mean, anything we want, they'll do it for us. They've been awesome.

SKRATCH: The new album, **EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU DON'T LOOK DOWN**, drops this month. How would you describe this album as a whole?

LOPEZ: Well...it's more melodic and a little bit heavier than the last three albums.

SKRATCH: How have you guys grown and evolved since those albums?

LOPEZ: I don't know. We just matured and started writing different music and stuff.

SKRATCH: So basically you're just getting better with time?

LOPEZ: Yeah.

SKRATCH: Any particular messages that you guys are conveying to your listeners?

LOPEZ: No, not really. It's always been the same message really. We just like to do what we like to do, you know?

SKRATCH: Now, for a punker you have some mainstream tastes. It's no secret that you are a big fan of **AMERICAN IDOL**.

LOPEZ: Oh yeah, I love that show.

SKRATCH: How big of a fan are you? Do you call in and vote?

LOPEZ: Man, I watch that show all the time—last year and this year, too...I was watching that show all the time. It's awesome.

SKRATCH: Were you happy that the big guy won?

LOPEZ: I was going for Clay, but, I mean, Ruben is still really, really good.

SKRATCH: Dude, I also heard that you have a thing for Mandy Moore.

LOPEZ: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

SKRATCH: What is it about her?

LOPEZ: She's hot, man.

SKRATCH: You want to hook up with her?

LOPEZ: Oh yeah. When I get famous, I'm definitely gonna try to get with her.

SKRATCH: That'll be one of the perks of being famous, right?

LOPEZ: Oh yeah, definitely.

SKRATCH: Back to the CD...Tell me about the title track. What is it about?

LOPEZ: Well, basically, we wrote it to try to see things that aren't always the norm [for] society and stuff. Just open your eyes to other things around you, don't just be...you know...naïve to one thing.

SKRATCH: Has the war with Iraq and terrorism inspired any music?

LOPEZ: No, not really. I mean, things happen, whatever.... It really doesn't change anything with us.

SKRATCH: What are your personal feelings regarding the war and everything going on?

LOPEZ: I'm not really for or against it, I just think that people should support the troops. I mean, they're out there fighting for the country. To be unsupportive...I don't think that's right. Whether or not you agree with [the war], you should still support the troops, because they're out there fighting for all of us.

SKRATCH: What do you want people to walk away with after hearing this record?

LOPEZ: I want them to hear something different, something they never heard before, something new and fresh. And they can learn something from our record, you know?

SKRATCH: What makes you different? What separates Glasseater from all the other bands in your genre?

LOPEZ: Um...I don't know. Every time I put on our record and listen to it, I can never really compare it to anybody specific. I'm not exactly sure what it is. Maybe [it's] the way we write and mix and blend our sound makes us stand out.

SKRATCH: These are exciting times for you guys.

LOPEZ: Yeah, we're really excited and anticipating the release so we can see how people are gonna react to it and stuff.

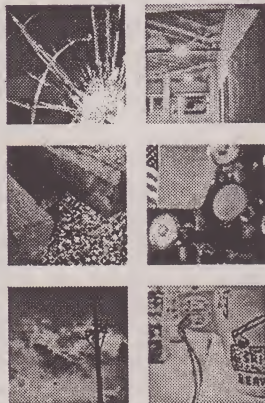
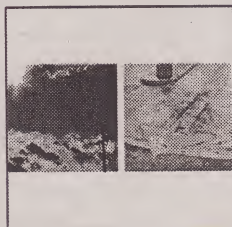
SKRATCH: What does the future hold for Glasseater? Paint the big picture for me.

LOPEZ: We just want to keep touring as much as we can, just keep getting on as many tours as possible. That's what we always wanted to do.

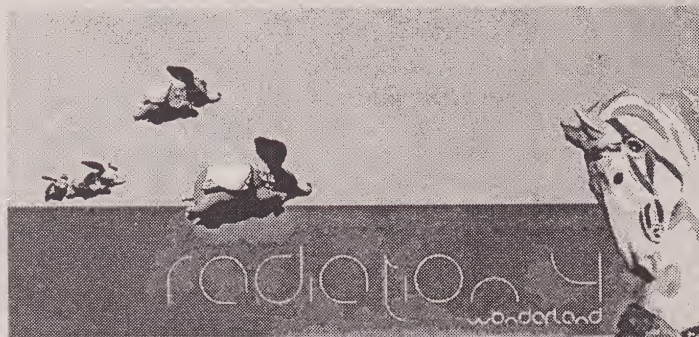
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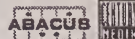
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DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE



DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE Interview by Annette Ovanessian

During the six days I spent on the Vans Warped Tour this summer, I got a chance to interview Destruction Made Simple. Having never heard their music before, I was in a complete shock when I saw them perform for the first time. Vocalist Raul, paints his face for performing and connects with his audience. To me, the music is extremely hardcore rock, but to them it's punk rock, metal, and ska intertwined. Playing at the Warped Tour this year has been quite an experience for the band. Beyond their crazy style of music and persona, the guys are truly humble and smart. Their lyrics focus on the political and social concerns of our generation in the hopes of grasping people's attention about important issues. Not holding back their thoughts and opinions, the album **TERROR STRICKEN YOUTH** shouts it all out!

In the interview below, Destruction Made Simple tells us about everything from having their RV blown up with all their equipment inside to having their punk-rock peers call them sellouts.

Destruction Made Simple is:

RAUL—vocals
ANDY—guitar
ADRIAN—guitar
MEDINA—drummer
ERIC—bass

SKRATCH: What is the history of Destruction Made Simple?

RAUL: My guitarist Adrian and I wrote a ton of material. A month later we got our drummer, and I found our bassist one day walking down the street. I knew he had played bass before and asked him if he wanted to join. (He was in a band called Fiasco [at the time].) Within two months we played a show at my house, and we've been playing at clubs from there on.

SKRATCH: I hear you guys like to talk a lot of shit about other bands. What kind of shit do you say?

RAUL: We tell people about how some bands really are. A lot of bands will go out on stage, and they'll [put on] this front like they're somebody like this, but backstage their just total assholes [...] We will tell people that they're assholes and not to back these guys up. So bands get mad—but we don't care.

ANDY: I don't think we talk shit, we just tell the truth. That's it.

SKRATCH: Do other bands talk shit on you guys?

RAUL: No, they don't talk shit. They do something worse, which is [that] they look our way and then roll their eyes.

ANDY: Bands really don't take us seriously because our singer has a painted face.

RAUL: But somehow AFI gets all the credentials they need. [I'm] not talking about AFI, because Davey is a great friend of mine, but it's just the way it works sometimes.

SKRATCH: Your lyrics are very political. What do you guys know about politics and governmental issues that concerns you?

RAUL: I read books, and our drummer reads books.

ANDY: I read books when I'm not lazy. All I know is, I may not be all intelligent in politics, but I just live the average life like everyone else; and my views are about what goes on in the world around me every day.

RAUL: Our president is a major concern. I

heard that people were talking shit about NOFX because they are on the radio. He's not on the radio because he wants to be: Fat Mike is doing it because he wants to change America. Finally a badass stood up and said, We're gonna go up against him, and that's why they play NOFX. A lot of bands are rallying around it, but there are other bands out there that are fuckin' pussies [who] don't want to do nothing; they are scared. We would walk in Wisconsin and talk shit about George Bush, and all of a sudden we'll get a crowd roaring for us. So, you got to have balls to do something. Change the world.

SKRATCH: Is it true you paint your face because of AFI or Kiss?

RAUL: I never listened to AFI 'till a few month's ago. I'm not kidding. I went to a KROQ Weenie Roast, and I saw Kiss. From there, I was hooked. That's it—painted face all the way.

SKRATCH: I heard you guys said "Fuck SKRATCH" when performing once. Why?

RAUL: I think the girl that they sent over to the Allen Theater did not know what she was going to. She was expecting the Glasshouse gold-medal treatment. The Allen Theater is a place for kids who can't afford to go to Hollywood—so expect a line. Don't expect to just come and get in because you're a writer for SKRATCH or MEANSTREET; it doesn't work that way. We got pissed at the fact that we heard that they were talking trash about the venue. We actually put all our work into painting it and putting our blood, sweat, and tears into that venue to open it up.

SKRATCH: Tell us about the unfortunate experience you guys had to face when your RV blew up in the middle of the Warped Tour.

RAUL: Well, we were in Chicago the day before. The show went great, but nobody expected us to

go that far in a 1978 Pasero. We decided to do it, anyway. So we were driving up to Canada the next morning, and we were about 45 miles outside of Minnesota, and it just caught on fire. We were all asleep,

TERROR STRICKEN YOUTH

and everybody just jumped out.

ANDY: I was asleep, and Brian was the driver at the time, and I woke up to screaming of "Get out! Get out!" and I jumped out. Before I could turn around it was halfway gone. All we know is that it started in the engine; and that it was probably electrical, because when we grabbed the fire extinguisher, it did nothing.

SKRATCH: Is it true that you honestly believe it's a possibility that George Bush is the conspiracy behind the RV blowing up?

RAUL: It is!

ANDY: It's not just him, though: he has a lot of people, too. We're realistic. It can't just be one guy, but he's the representative of the country and everything in it, so to blame him would be blaming the main dude. You take the queen bee out, and the hive is gone.

RAUL: We don't give a fuck—it's his fault, we know it's his fault.

SKRATCH: How did you guys replace the

because after it happened a lot of bands at the tour got together and put donations together [for us].

SKRATCH: The most important thing is that all of you guys are alive.

RAUL: Actually, we were telling our stage manager to "Go back in! Go back in!" [Laughs]

ANDY: I heard that no one actually knew if we were alive or dead because no one heard from us for the first couple of days. A lot of bands got worried.

SKRATCH: Why do East L.A. punk bands call you sellouts?

RAUL: I don't know.

ANDY: I find it hard to sell out before you put out your first record—so for bands to call us sellouts for playing a couple dates on the Warped Tour and playing the smaller stage is wrong. They don't get asked to play; they just come and invade it. They can't call us sellouts when we don't even have a record deal yet and we are still making our own T-shirts in the oven and passing out our CDs ourselves. I just don't get it.

"I may not be all intelligent in politics, but I just live the average life like everyone else; and my views are about what goes on in the world around me every day."

RAUL: I want you to look at my pockets. [Writer's note: I can confirm that they were empty.]

SKRATCH: Besides your RV burning up, how has the Warped Tour been so far?

RAUL: It's been a roller-coaster ride. It has its ups and its downs.

You're not always gonna agree with what the Warped Tour does, but in the end they're the man. You just got to trust them sometimes. The tour has been the greatest—but with the good comes the bad.

SKRATCH: After the tour, what is your next mission?

RAUL: We're really hoping to tour with a big band. We're hoping maybe a band like Pennywise, AFL, or maybe even Anti-Flag. We need a tour to take us where our goals are.

For more information on Destruction Made Simple, visit the Website at: www.destruction-madesimple.com.

items lost?

RAUL: None of it is replaced. Everything is borrowed. We borrowed some guitars from 13-year-old kids who destroy their guitars, and we put it to good use. It's been pretty tough, though. We have guitars cutting out and some that are not working as good as our old stuff. It's hard. I would never wish what happened to us [to happen to] anybody.

ANDY: It was kind of cool,

MADE SIMPLE

ELAD LOVE AFFAIR
Interview by Davie Kaufmann

Elad Love Affair (Bill Abdale, Mark Duggan, Mark Ludwiczak, Ryan McMullen, and Nola Ranallo) make music that is at once both challenging and accessible. Their live show will scare the shit out of you, yet leave you salivating for more. Believe it or not, behind the explosive energy she projects live, vocalist Nola Ranallo has her own inhibitions. Here she opens up about how she can't help but notice the occasional stare from an audience member who just doesn't "get it"—and, more importantly, why that will never, ever, stop her.

SKRATCH: First of all, how's the tour going for you guys?

NOLA: It's pretty good. It's been quite an adventure for us, I guess.

SKRATCH: How many cities have you been to so far?

NOLA: I think...We're calculating it...six shows, only.

SKRATCH: Where are you guys now?

NOLA: We're in Morgantown, West Virginia.

SKRATCH: For people who aren't familiar with it, describe the music scene in Buffalo.

NOLA: In Buffalo, it's kind of like an old metal town. There are some generic metal bands, but, I mean, if you dig a little deeper, there are a lot of different kinds of bands, all different kinds of music—you know, indie-rock bands, hardcore bands, basement punk bands, things like that. If you're too lazy to look around, you probably won't find it, I guess.

SKRATCH: I was going to say...You definitely straddle a line between more straightforward hardcore and avant-garde punk. Is there a dominance of one of those types of music in Buffalo? Do you feel like you fit into one scene more?

NOLA: No, I think [...] in Buffalo...we're kind of out of place at our shows—which is good, I think. I don't think someone would label us as either one of those things.

SKRATCH: Your music is—judging from the EP, at least—very stream of consciousness; but at the same time there are these fragmented parts, especially in "Bee Swallow" and "On Wifeburning". When you write together, does it go more one of those ways than the other? Does it all come out at once, or do you come up with smaller parts and then put them together later?

NOLA: Our music is basically a collaboration between all of us. Someone could come to practice with a guitar riff or a bass line or something like that. Maybe they'd even write a whole song, and [then] we'd all work around it and add in our own parts and our own input. That's how it kind of happens.

SKRATCH: Live, when you really sort of go off and get involved with the crowd so much, are you ever inhibited? Do ever worry that someone's not going to dig it?

NOLA: All the time. I think it's so important to do that, to have everybody feel like they're a part of it, to have everybody involved and get their attention. It makes them listen. I think it's really necessary. I couldn't imagine not doing it.

SKRATCH: Have you ever had a moment with someone who didn't really get it, a horror moment?

NOLA: Yeah. I'm actually really insecure and shy. If someone gives me a weird look, I'm like, [In a nervous tone] "Oh, you don't like me?" I try to take someone's hand, and sometimes you can tell they're like, "What are you DOING?"—things like that. I always feel that people give me dirty looks or something. I don't know.

SKRATCH: Was your first show so aggressive? Is that something that came with time?

NOLA: Well, yeah, our very first show...It was

something none of us had ever done before. I think that we kind of grew into what we are now. It took time to figure out what we wanted to do. It was always, whenever we played, even from the beginning...It's impossible not to be passionate and into it. It was always there.

SKRATCH: It just took time to come out?

NOLA: Yeah. [With] every show you gain more confidence in what you do, and you feel better about it.

SKRATCH: Is there one artist you guys all worship? I noticed there are some influences that are shared among two or three people, but maybe not one that you all feel the same way about.

NOLA: Yeah, if I were to say one, it would be Fugazi. We all really appreciate them, we all really like them, and we all listen to them. We all really do have our own tastes in music, [which] really differ.

SKRATCH: In terms of where your career is going (I don't like that word, by the way), do you have THE goal, one thing that you're shooting for?

NOLA: We all feel like we have to do this. It's a part of who we are as people. There's no question that this is what's right for us. We need it. Musically...well, what do you mean?

SKRATCH: Well, it could be musically. For example, some bands—and this is not to put words into your mouth or say that you would think this—would say, "We want to get signed to a major label" or "THE goal is to write songs like this one band...."

NOLA: Well, yeah. Our goal, of course, is to write lots of songs [...] to perfect that. I think we all really feel like there's a void in music, and that our band might be able to fill that void.

SKRATCH: Now, to sum it all up for people who haven't heard you guys before, what are five words you'd use to describe your music or to describe the general "spirit" of the band?

NOLA: I would say..."chaotic," definitely... "change-up"...I don't know. It's not like I could be, like, "We're this kind of band" or "We're that kind of band." I don't really know where we fit in or what exactly you could stick on us.

Elad Love Affair's new EP, *A WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO A GUN AND IT STABS HER*, is out now on Immigrant Sun Records (www.immigrantsun.com).



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STUNT MONKEY



SKRATCH caught up with the two founders of Stunt Monkey, Aram and Michael, and spoke with them about the hot moms, bear claws, and working with Bill Stevenson.

STUNT MONKEY By Don Sill

Stunt Monkey has become one of San Jose's most notable exports. Originally formed in 1997, this DIY punk outfit (which is comprised of Aram Sarkissian, Michael Rossi, Evan Bautista, and Ben Lazarus) is getting heavy airplay on mainstream radio stations like LIVE 105 and KMBY. They have rocked stages on the Vans Warped Tour three years in a row. Recently, they have worked with producer Bill Stevenson (Black Flag, Descendants, ALL) and engineer Jason Livermore (Descendants, ALL) at the Blasting Room in Colorado on their forthcoming album, SELF-TITLED (Transmission Records). The album is full of smart-ass pop-punk tracks that have a Blink 182-meets-NOFX vibe. Tunes like "Your Mom Is Hot" and "Girlfriend Likes Girls" resonates with that AMERICAN PIE aesthetic designed for the Y generation.

SKRATCH: The new album just dropped, and I'm digging it.
ARAM: Thanks, man. We still like it a lot, too. We listen to it a lot, actually. [Laughs]
MICHAEL: We started recording it a year ago, man.

SKRATCH: So you guys must be very comfortable with all the material on the album.
ARAM: Oh, for sure. We love it. Every song we write we like to think we're sort of comfortable with. I mean, it takes us a little while to learn how to play stuff, because we suck. But other than that...yeah. The songs that we write we keep because they speak to us, you know? We probably write dozens and dozens of songs, from which we pick one out of four that will make it on to an album.

SKRATCH: Take me through the weeding process. Like, out of four songs, how do you decide which one song will make it? Is it a band decision?
MICHAEL: More or less. Aram and I come up with the initial idea more times than not, and then we kind of show Evan and Ben what we're up to and play the song, and if the four of us get it and it's working and it

sounds good and everybody has their parts and we're having fun playing it, then we keep it. But if for some reason one of those things just doesn't work, then it doesn't become a Stunt Monkey song.
ARAM: I mean, we don't sit there and vote. It becomes pretty obvious, you know? There's never been a time where after the song was done that someone says they don't like it or whatever. It's not even a matter of fighting to keep songs or voting on things; it becomes pretty obvious what we like and don't like as a band.
MICHAEL: Yeah, there's never been any two-two votes where we needed somebody to do a tie-breaker or something like that. [Laughs] Every song you hear on this album was four-zero in favor. Every song that didn't make the album is zero-four. We'll all just say, No, this isn't happening for us, it doesn't work.

SKRATCH: So you guys are all on the same page.
MICHAEL: Frighteningly so. Aram and I have been doing this for about six years now; and about three years ago Evan and Ben

joined; and the chemistry has been frighteningly good. We all almost think the same way, and so it's been really good for the four of us to really gel as a band. The band really became a band about three years ago.

SKRATCH: Aram, your nickname is "Bearclaw"?
ARAM: Yeah. Not too many people really call me that, but occasionally it comes out. I got the nickname when we were in Phoenix at this dive of a donut store. I think it was a donut shop that was really used as a money drop or something. It was like 3 o'clock in the morning after a show, and we in this donut shop/money-drop-off place, and there's some guy behind the counter who didn't look like he knew anything about donuts, and I walked up to him and growled, "GIMME A BEARCLAW!" Then I got the bear

claw, and I actually stuck my fist into the bear claw and wore it for about 15 minutes, and I was walking around like a superhero. "Call me the BEARCLAW!" I was just parading around this place. We were all loopy. It was late, and we were waiting for bullets to come through the window and we'd never make it home, so I figured, Let's have a good time. So I did that, and it stuck. A few days later somebody picked up a donut and stuck in on their hand and said, "Call me the BEARCLAW!" And that's the story of Bearclaw.

SKRATCH: And Mike, they call you "Milkshake"?

MICHAEL: Well, I don't know how to put it...I'm "digestly adverse" to milk products. I am a little lactose intolerant....

them out ourselves; but we recorded this album with Bill Stevenson as our producer a year ago, and we were like, "You know, I think a few more people need to hear this." It's really rewarding to have it out there. We really liked what Bill did with our songs, how he helped us realize the full potential of our music.

SKRATCH: That must have been cool to work with a punk legend like Stevenson, who has produced so many great bands, such as Black Flag and The Descendants. MICHAEL: Oh yeah, man. I think Bill was just amazed that we made it that far [...] out there to Colorado. Bill even let us sleep in the studio. So we were there sleeping on the floor. We'd play, stop at night, fall asleep, wake up the next morning, and start recording again. We were never separated from it at all.

SKRATCH: Man, so you guys lived in the studio and everything.

ARAM: No, he's LOT lactose intolerant. It's hideous.

MICHAEL: See, before we go on really long road trips, I generally have a milkshake and a bowl of chili—just so I can share with everybody on the road.

SKRATCH: Oh, man, [Laughs] that's just wrong.

MICHAEL: [Laughs] It's not nice at all; but I think of myself as a giving person.

SKRATCH: Let's get into the album. The new album just dropped last week. You must be stoked?

ARAM: Yeah, we're really stoked. This is the first album for us with distribution, and having kids be able to go out and pick it up in stores all over the country is just great [...] We're proud to have this out there.

MICHAEL: We were always really proud to do the albums ourselves and put

SKRATCH: The first single, "Girlfriend Likes Girls", is doing pretty well.

ARAM: Yeah. We were surprised, too. But it's happening the right way, because we never wanted to be an "overnight success." We wanted people to gradually get into us, and that's what's happening. It's cool. It's growing in an organic way, and that's awesome.

notice girls, and you're thinking, "Wow, I would hit that!" It's like the girls in eighth grade just aren't quite there yet, but your buddy's mom is. And you know she's putting out, 'cause she gave birth to your friend. ARAM: She's no virgin.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] So that tune is for hot moms everywhere?

ARAM: Yeah, hot moms everywhere—[including] hot moms to be. It's a universal experience. That's why I think everyone can identify with it.

SKRATCH: Yeah, everyone knows at least one hot mom.

ARAM: Hopefully at least two.

SKRATCH: I dig the track "Your Mom Is Hot". Whose Mom does that refer to?

ARAM: Okay, that is not about any one mom. Everyone's got that hot mom that they remember from childhood or you still see now. It's just a universal experience. We all had the hot moms, and we could say it was written about one, but it's not; it's written about hundreds. We see them now dropping off kids at the show. [Laughs]

MICHAEL: Exactly.

ARAM: Just the last show we did was loaded with hot moms.

MICHAEL: Everybody has that one friend with the hot mom—and it's right around that time when you're starting to o

"WE WERE ALL LOOPY. IT WAS LATE, AND WE WERE WAITING FOR BULLETS TO COME THROUGH THE WINDOW AND WE'D NEVER MAKE IT HOME..."

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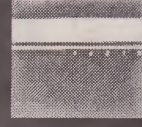
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THE METHADONES

By Don Sill

Dan Schafer (a.k.a. Danny Vapid, for you Screeching Weasel fans) is a very well-known musician in punk-rock circles. Having founded and been in such bands as Sludgeworth, Screeching Weasel, The Mopes, and The Riverdales, it's safe to say that he's been around the block a time or three. Now with his latest band, The Methadones, Schafer seems to be on his way towards bigger and better things.

I caught up with Schafer and got the skinny about The Methadones sophomore album, *CAREER OBJECTIVE* (on Thick Records); and I also discovered a few reasons why the singer/guitarist would be a worthy candidate for *BEHIND THE MUSIC*.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the new album, *CAREER OBJECTIVE*.

SCHAFER: It's collection of punk-rock songs written for myself. The theme/idea behind the record is about having to make a choice in a job or career at an age when everyone seems to know what they want.

SKRATCH: What message are you trying to convey to your fans?

SCHAFER: I'm just saying what I feel needs to be said in a song and letting the chips fall where they may.

SKRATCH: What inspires your lyrics?

SCHAFER: All kinds of stuff—music, books, movies, TV shows. Then [I try] to tie it in to some kind of experience I had—good or bad.

SKRATCH: How personal do you get in your lyrics?

SCHAFER: I get really personal. Everything in the lyrics on the record are things I've been through or am currently dealing with.

SKRATCH: Do you write best when you're angry, sad, happy, or does it matter?

SCHAFER: I don't think it matters. You can get good results with any of those emotions.

SKRATCH: Tell me about that track "Say Goodbye to Your Generation". What inspired it? What is the message there?

SCHAFER: That song is about growing up in a DIY punk-rock scene (mainly in the early '90s) and [living] into the birth of punk in the mainstream.

SKRATCH: What is the most important song on this record to you?

SCHAFER: I don't think I have a song that's most important, but a combination of tracks [are]—songs like "TV World", "Say Goodbye to Your Generation", and "Premature Mid-Life crisis" support the underlining theme of the record.

SKRATCH: Now, you were with Screeching Weasel for a number of years, as well as being in many other bands. You have lived the full-on rock star life style. These next questions are to see if you have what it takes to be featured on a future episode of *BEHIND THE MUSIC*. Were you beaten or abused by your parents as a kid?

SCHAFER: Of course.

SKRATCH: Are you currently doing any drugs?

SCHAFER: I'm high on X.

SKRATCH: What is your drug or drugs of choice?

SCHAFER: Crack.

SKRATCH: Ever been in a rehab facility for treatment?

SCHAFER: Yeah. I met Tommy Lee [there], and we became really close. We are each other's support system now. People just can't understand the pressures of fame.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the last time you drove drunk or stoned.

SCHAFER: I was coming home from Club Foot here in Chicago, when I had a religious experience. My car ran out of gas, and I had to walk three miles to the Shell gas station. By the time I got back to my car with the gas can, I was sober. I think the powers that be were looking out for me. I was drunk as hell and shouldn't have been driving.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the last time you performed a show drunk or stoned.

SCHAFER: Iowa City, [I was] drunk as a skunk. I don't think the people from that town like me too much anymore.

SKRATCH: When was the last time you had a fistfight? What happened? Who won?

SCHAFER: It was a party in 1991. This guy I couldn't stand was flirting with my girlfriend of the time. When I confronted him, he was a total asshole. Later that night as I was leaving the party, we got into a fight out on the street. He had me pinned and was beating up my face. For some reason I didn't care. I just kept spitting blood and obscenities at him. He freaked out. After that he totally avoided me—even though he won the fight.

SKRATCH: When was the last time you threw fists at a bandmate?

SCHAFER: It was with Methadones guitarist Mike Byrne. About two years ago on tour he kept bragging to anyone who'd listen that he could solve the Rubik's Cube in under two minutes. He would walk up to kids at our shows, have them scramble the cube, and then solve it. It kept going on and on, and it was really annoying. One show we were by the merch table, and he started showing off, and I grabbed the cube from him and wouldn't give it back. He shoved me, I shoved him back. The next thing I know Pete, Mike Soucy, and our roadie Q-Ball were separating us. He still brings that Rubik's Cube around, but not around me. I think I won—but, then again, so does he.

SKRATCH: Have you ever slept with a bandmate's girlfriend?

SCHAFER: There was Chris Stucky from The Igor Skulls. It was the first band I played in, when I was 15 years old. He had a girlfriend named Jan. I used to always call her Jan Brady, and she would laugh. I always secretly hated her name, but I always thought she was really nice, so I didn't tease her about it too much. She was really pretty, too. She kind of reminded me of Winnie from *THE WONDER YEARS*, just a few years older. One day Chris got grounded for stealing his parents' beer. Jan and I had the beer and decided to drink the rest of it in the park. After a few I beers I would flirtatiously say her name, and then she'd say mine back: "Jan," "Dan." It turned into a stupid game because the names rhymed. The next thing I know Jan grabbed me and kissed me; then I grabbed her and kissed her—a good French kiss with plenty of tongue. The next day she told Stucky, and he freaked out. He took the bass that I had let him borrow and smashed it and TP'd my house. A few weeks



his girlfriend just to spite the prick. About a

month after that he quit The Igor Skulls. To this day he still won't talk to me, and I get an Xmas card from Jan every year.

SKRATCH: Roughly how many groupies have you slept with?

SCHAFER: 27. That number means a lot to me, and I wouldn't want to tarnish it—not to mention jeopardize my engagement by sleeping with more. I'm set on preserving this magical number. I now have a strict no-groupie policy.

SKRATCH: How many groupies at one time?

SCHAFER: Two. Pretty humbling, huh?

SKRATCH: Have you ever served any jail time?

SCHAFER: When Tommy and I got out of rehab, we both fell off the wagon one night. I was playing him a song by Borris the Sprinkler called "Buying Beer for Junior High School Students". We felt inspired and decided to have an experiment. One thing led to another, and the next thing we knew they slapped the cuffs on us.

SKRATCH: And finally, have you ever killed anyone?

SCHAFER: Just insects.

The Methadones new record, *CAREER OBJECTIVE*, is available through Thick Records and Stardumb Records in Europe. Be sure to log on to www.methadones.com for more info.

the Methadones



NO WARNING

No Warning
Interview by Melissa Wong

I'm nodding my head to the sound of Ben Cook's screaming lyrics—"Fuck you! Fuck you!"—and even 10 minutes later, the lyrics are still running around in my head. The first time I listened to No Warning's new LP, *ILL BLOOD*, I absolutely loved it. The next day I couldn't wait to interview the four Toronto boys and Mr. Zach Attack from Philly. The guys from No Warning are young, talented, and ready to dominate the world...or that's what lead singer Ben Cook says. NW has a sound similar to that of Madball, one of NYC's original hardcore bands, and the guys from NW recorded with Matt Henderson of Madball for their new album. The guys plan to tour their butts off on the West Coast during the fall. Oh yeah, and Ben wants to go out with Avril. Ben and Avril sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G...hehe. Or not.

SKRATCH: Everyone except Zach is from Toronto, right? Tell me who is in the band and how long NW has been around.
BEN: The band is me Ben, Jordan Posner, Matt DeLong, Zach Attack, and Jesse Labovitz. We've been kickin' it since, like, 1999. It started out when we were like 15-16 years old. [It's] pretty fucked up that we've come this far. Everyone is from Toronto, [except] Zach is from Philly and has always been our good friend, [a] huge supporter of the band. [He's] toured with us, helped us book tours—and when we needed a bass player, he didn't hesitate to join.

SKRATCH: What is Toronto like?

BEN: It's home to us, so it's cool. It's just like any other big city, I guess: fun shit to do, good food, some decent shows. We've lived here all our lives, so it's nothing special, I guess—it's just where we live.

SKRATCH: I listened to your new release, *ILL BLOOD*. It was released in November of 2002, am I correct? I really enjoyed "Behind These Walls" and "No Time for You". Tell me more about this album—what you guys enjoyed and what problems you had with it.

BEN: It was released in November, yeah. The album was recorded like last spring in Brooklyn, NY, with Dean Baltulonis at Atomic Studios. It was an awesome experience, to say the least. It was really hard work that took a lot out of us. We are definitely satisfied with it as a debut full-length. It represents what we are about very accurately, and I think it's awesome that people really dig it. When we try to do something, we try to do the best we can—no half-assed shit here. It's hard working when you're all pretty much perfectionists—especially me; but it's a good way to be.

SKRATCH: You recorded in Brooklyn? That must have been a drive! It seems like the process could have been a real pain in the ass. Tell me about the traveling back and forth.
BEN: Since we live 10 hours away and went over the time we had booked, we had to make a few trips. We aren't rich kids, and we don't have lots of cash from a huge label or anything, so we drive back and forth in Jord's beat-up Civic.

SKRATCH: What will NW be doing for 2003? Will you be touring with The Cro-Mags and The Hope Conspiracy?

BEN: We already did that tour in, like, November. For the rest of this year, we just want to play as much as we can. We've been working on some new material that one day we'll eventually be busting out. [We're] toying with new ideas, new-release talk...but what we really need to do is tour. And that's what we are going to do very soon. [But] vans cost money, [and] we are bums. But we'll be a full-time touring band soon.

SKRATCH: What is in each of your CD players right now?

BEN: Biggie's *LIFE AFTER DEATH*, 50 Cent's *GET RICH*, the new Snoop disc, some dub reggae, Obituary, Obie Trice and Dre's *THE CHRONIC*.

JORDAN: Obituary's *CAUSE OF DEATH*.

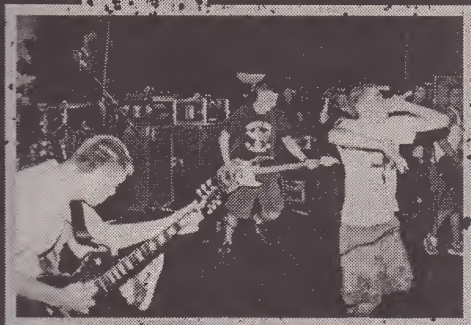
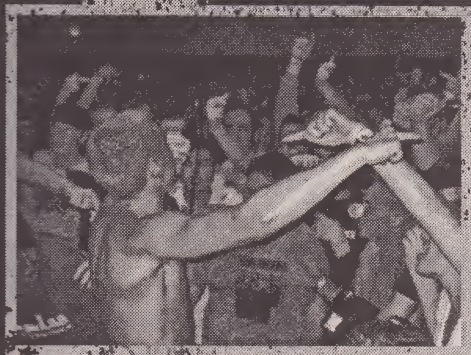
ZACH: Talib Kweli's *QUALITY*, The Hellacopters' *BY GRACE OF GOD*, and Mobb Deep's *INFAMY*.

SKRATCH: I went to the Madball show at CBGB in April, and it was fantastic. What was it like working with Matt Henderson?

BEN: It was awesome. He's a real chill dude, real good. Fucking amazing at guitar. He laid down some shit on our record as a favor. It was awesome of him. He plugged in and started wailing all these Metallica riffs and Pantera shit. He's GOOD.

JORDAN: Working with Henderson was an experience in itself. He works at the studio we recorded at, and would be there every other day or so, so we asked him to do a solo for the song "All New Low". He listened to the song once, and did the track in one take.

SKRATCH: What kind of shoes do you guys wear?



"Avril and I are on the rocks because I heard she sucked Nelly's dick—and for some reason I think she did it..."

BEN: Shoes are very important items of dress. I have a lot of fuckin' shoes. I got my eye on some white-on-white Air Force Ones with gum soles for the summer, though. Be on the look out for my sportin' those fuckers one day.

SKRATCH: How old is everyone in the band? Is everyone single?

BEN: 19-20. Everyone is single except for Jesse; Jesse has three girlfriends: Misty, Afghan, and the circus freak who has weed buds growing in her snatch instead of pubic hair (her name is Brian). He's a very happy man...such a lady's man.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] I read in a couple interviews that you are dating Avril Lavigne. Is this madness true?

BEN: Avril and I are on the rocks because I heard she sucked Nelly's dick—and for some reason I think she did it. Fuck her, it's over. In fact, we were never dating, and I've met her [only] once, and it sucked. But I said it once for a joke in an interview once, and since then all these losers hang off my every word. [...] I thought it was funny, so I kept it going. So if you are reading, please continue to spread these rumors. They are awesome.

SKRATCH: How do the crowds in the U.S. differ from those in Canada?

BEN: There's not much difference usually. Sometimes the U.S. shows have more kids in attendance to see us than the Canadian shows, but that's just because there's a bigger scene down there. Canada is on the upswing, though, so we'll see what's up in a couple years.

SKRATCH: When you look back at NW from the very beginning, what do you think has changed

most for you as members of a band? through your music?

BEN: Obviously we've gotten better at writing. Our concept of how long a song should be out laid out has changed. We've gotten better at what we do, whether it is singing or playing instruments. We've grown up together. 16-20 is a big time in your life, and we spent it together, so we know each other really well—how to push each other's buttons and how not to...which is very important to a band if you want it to last. We used to fight all the time, and it was because we weren't as comfortable with each other.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Do you guys have a lot of support from your families?

BEN: I only live with my mom, and she's been one of the most supportive people ever with this shit. It means a lot to have her on my side, and I'll pay her back one day.

ZACH: My family is amazing, especially my mom and my step dad. They've been extremely supportive of everything I've done. When I was 15 my mom let me go on tour in California with my first band, Intention. How many moms would do that?

SKRATCH: What do you enjoy most about touring?

BEN: I enjoy everything about touring except eating shitty and being really tired. I want to tour the world. A lot. Everywhere. Domination!

SKRATCH: What are all the releases NW has out?

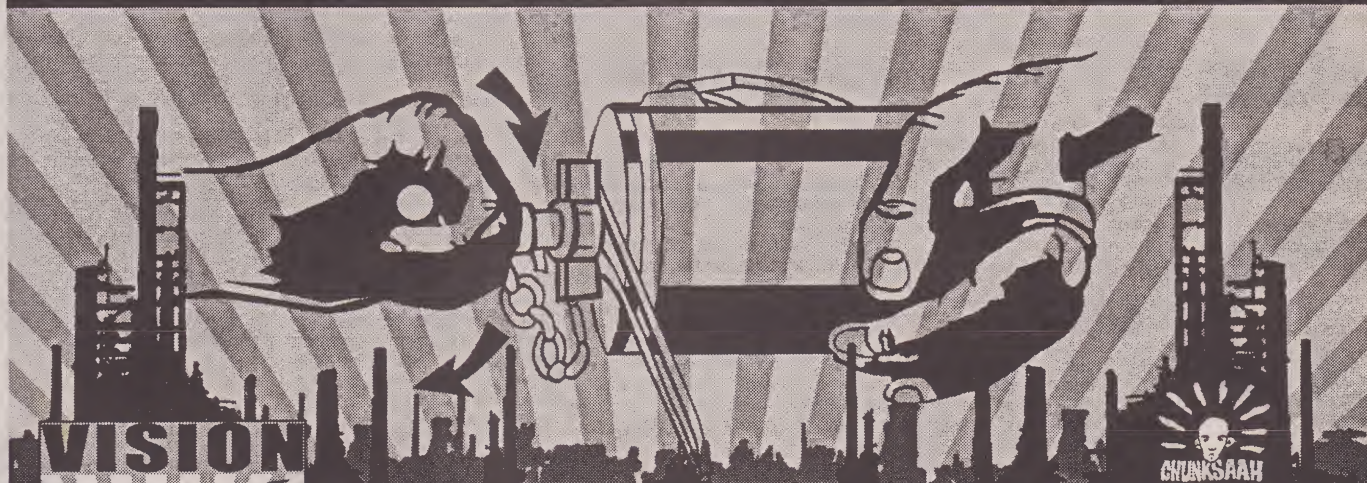
BEN: A three-song demo tape that we released; a 7" on Martyr Records; a CD with the demo and the 7" released on Bridge Nine; and our first full-length, ILL BLOOD, on Bridge Nine.

SKRATCH: Alright, that's all I've got. Anything I've left out?

BEN: I love you. Thanks for the interview. Drop us a line at , and come check out our shows!

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me, guys. I love you, too...I think. Good luck with your touring in this fall. For more info on the guys from No Warning, check out their Website at . I definitely recommend everyone check out their new album, ILL BLOOD. It's excellent.

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Cobra High

Cobra High
Interview by Denise Blaz

It was a scorching hot Tuesday when I met these guys for this interview. They played at Emo's that night. Cobra High's music is unlike anything I've EVER heard before—and that's definitely a good thing. I think they've single-handedly formed a completely new category of music. The members all offer up something amazing. Marty Lund's drumming is feverishly powerful. I haven't seen drumming that intense since I last saw Queens of the Stone Age live. Justin and Colin have dynamic stage presence. And Joram...well, let's just say that anyone who can smoke a cigarette and play guitar at the same

JUSTIN: We've known each other for quite a while.

SKRATCH: How does your live sound differ from the sound on the record?
JUSTIN: Actually, it's much different, because it's much louder.
JORAM: Live [we are] definitely more raw, because when we record there's all kinds of [extra stuff], especially vocals and other tracks that we don't have enough hands to play live. We do extra tracks when we record.

SKRATCH: Who made up the name "Cobra High"? Is there a story behind it?
JUSTIN: There's not: it's just word-matching that didn't bother anyone.

JORAM: Portland people seemed to be a little less open and a little bit more critical, and that made it more difficult.

ty much completely different to what it was in the beginning.
MARTY: We pretty much work and rework.
JORAM: For a long time.
MARTY: Over and over again.



time has my respect. These guys are ascending new heights—and people are taking notice, as it seems that the band is creating a bit of a following.

SKRATCH: How's the tour going so far?
JUSTIN: Real good and real bad. It's pretty rough.
JORAM: Yeah, hit and miss.

SKRATCH: What's been the best part about it?
JUSTIN: Like, city-wise?

SKRATCH: Yeah.
JUSTIN: New York was amazing, the South has been pretty good so far. Little Rock, Arkansas...
JORAM: Overall, New York was the best place.

SKRATCH: How about the worst part?
JORAM: Half of the Midwest.
JUSTIN: Not having any money.

SKRATCH: I understand that you've only been together for two years (maybe a little bit more than that now). How did the band develop so quickly to what it is today?
JUSTIN: Basically we've all known each other off and on for a really long time. Joram and I grew up together in California, and then he was living up in Oregon and knew Colin. Then I moved up to Oregon to play music with Joram. Marty was living there at the time, and we all worked the same job.
JORAM: Yeah, we played music within the same scene and together for a long time. We met Colin because he put on shows in St. Louis at a warehouse that he had; and Justin and I were in a band.

JORAM: We tried to think of a band name forever, and we just went with "Cobra High."

SKRATCH: What were some others that were that you were thinking of?
JUSTIN: I don't remember.
JORAM: There were some funny ones.
JUSTIN: We thought "Cobra High" was fairly decent.
JORAM: Nobody hated it, so...

SKRATCH: I read that your music is reminiscent to the '80s sound. Does '80s music really play a role in your music?
COLIN: I'm always thinking more '70s.
JUSTIN: I think the '80s comes through though because of some of the keyboard-playing and the bass use and stuff.
MARTY: I think we draw from rock history, but then the '80s is one of the last things that has been incorporated into more modern-sounding rock, so it might stand out a lot more, too.
JORAM: There's not a specific group from the '80s that we're huge fans of and trying to replicate or anything like that. We like all music from the '60s to now and draw from all of it, pretty much.

SKRATCH: Why did you decide to relocate from Portland to Seattle?
JUSTIN: Probably for a number of reasons, but the number-one [reason] being that we weren't doing as well as we wanted to be doing in Portland. We weren't doing as well as we could because of the amount of people in that city and the amount of venues. Seattle is just better for us in every respect.

SKRATCH: How would you describe your stage show?
JUSTIN: It's pretty random.
JORAM: We just try to play pretty loud.
JUSTIN: If it sounds good on stage, then we're going to have a good time.

SKRATCH: Can you describe your sound?
JORAM: We've been battling with that one for a long time.
MARTY: Because we have to do it all the time; someone is always asking us that.
JUSTIN: People are always saying that we're prog-rock or the exact opposite or '80s.
JORAM: We've just been telling people that we're a synth-rock band, because that seems to cover it.
JUSTIN: Even though that's not exactly it.

SKRATCH: Can you take me through your songwriting process?
JORAM: Most of the time Justin will bring in something he wrote on piano or keyboard. But whoever brings something in it changes a lot just because we're all affected by the parts that we write, so by the end what comes out is pret-

SKRATCH: Any other comments?
JORAM: I don't know. We've pretty much all have been brain dead from the heat all day.
JUSTIN: Were also going on tour with Pretty Girls Make Graves in October and November.
JORAM: And we're going to do the Dim Mak/Cold Crush showcase for CMJ up at The Knitting Factory.

A couple of days after I got this assignment, I saw this kid at the Warped Tour wearing a homemade Cobra High T-shirt. Although the crowd there that night was small because Cobra High went on quite early, but those present seemed to thoroughly enjoy the band. My only regret would be that I didn't tell the guys what a great set they played that night. Cobra High is currently touring in support of their new album, *SUNSET IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE*. Tour information can be obtained on their Website at and/or their label's Website, www.coldcrushrecords.com.



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BEAR

VS.

SHARK



BEAR VS SHARK
By Don Sill
Photos by Davide A Stella

Michigan-based emo/hardcore band Bear Vs Shark (Derek Kiesgen, John Gaviglio, Brandon Moss, and Mike Muldoon) are anticipating the release of their debut album off Equal Vision Records, **RIGHT NOW YOU'RE IN THE BEST OF HANDS. AND IF SOMETHING ISN'T QUITE RIGHT, YOUR DOCTOR WILL KNOW IN A HURRY.** Despite the album's long-winded title, it is a solid listen from beginning to end that blends hardcore/emo and indie rock into one solid opus. With introspective lyrics and disjointed melodies, Bear Vs Shark can manipulate the intensity level, going from heavy to soft on a dime.

I spoke to the band while they were on tour with labelmates This Day Forward only a week or so after the band's infamous bus accident, which led to them missing the Heart and Heavy Fest in Salem, MA.

SKRATCH: Dude, tell me about this bus mishap. What the hell happened?

PAFFI: Oh, man, it was absolutely crazy, it was insane. We just got new tires put on the day before, and the guy that put them on didn't tighten all the lug nuts. We were driving, and then the tire just flew off while I was going like 70 miles an hour. It

popped us up into the air...

SKRATCH: Holy shit!
PAFFI: Yeah, "holy shit" is right. I was driving, and man, it was CRAZY.

SKRATCH: Which tire was it?
PAFFI: It was the driver's-side back tire.

SKRATCH: You guys were on the highway, right?
PAFFI: Yeah—we were on I-80, actually.

SKRATCH: Okay, so you guys are on I-80, and all of a sudden the tire just flies off? Were there any other cars involved or anything?
PAFFI: No, it was 6 in the morning, and there were a few semis about 500 feet behind us, and we were sliding down the road sideways with 40-foot rooster tail, sparks flying out... It was insane.

SKRATCH: I heard that it was that equipment trailer that you guys were towing that pretty much saved your lives?
PAFFI: Yeah, that [kept] us on to the road.

SKRATCH: Nobody was hurt or anything?
PAFFI: No. The state trooper told us that if we didn't have that trailer we would have all been gone—we would have flipped.

SKRATCH: So thank God for that pain-in-the-ass trailer.
PAFFI: For sure. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Despite the whole tire incident, being on the road must be like a dream come true for you guys.
PAFFI: Oh, yeah, it is, absolutely. It's everything I ever wanted to do.

SKRATCH: How have the audiences been responding to you guys?
PAFFI: Pretty good. Our last show was pretty intense. I think sometimes we scare people with our antics on stage and stuff, but overall it's been great.

SKRATCH: You guys are certainly buzzing due to your live show. It is said to be out of control.
PAFFI: [Laughs] Yeah....

SKRATCH: You even lost some teeth on stage. How'd that happen?
PAFFI: I was just swinging the microphone on stage and it hit me and knocked a few teeth out. I also was standing on the drum kit and got pushed into the drummer and caught a stick in the face. I just do stuff like that.

SKRATCH: Dude, what's going through your mind when you're on stage?

PAFFI: I don't know. If I could explode, I probably would. I just get really fired up, and it's a big release for all of us up there. It's also exciting because we're playing for a bunch of kids who have never seen us before. So that, combined with everything else, gets pretty intense.

SKRATCH: What is the one thing you want those kids watching you to remember?
PAFFI: I really want them to have a good time; and I think that once our albums out and there more familiar with our songs, that'll come. But I just want them to have fun and just go off. I realize that no one has listened to our music yet, so....

SKRATCH: You guys have the big record-release party coming up. That should be wild.
PAFFI: It's gonna be a great time. A lot of the guys from the label are coming out, and the party is in an area where a lot of the kids are into us. I'm just real excited, first of all, to get the CD out there; and then to play. We're gonna play a super long set, and it's gonna get pretty intense in there.

SKRATCH: You're not gonna swing around any microphones, are you?
PAFFI: [Laughs] No, I kinda don't that anymore. After I lost those teeth, I kinda finished with that. But the show will be intense nonetheless.

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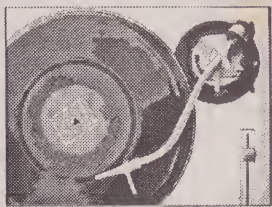
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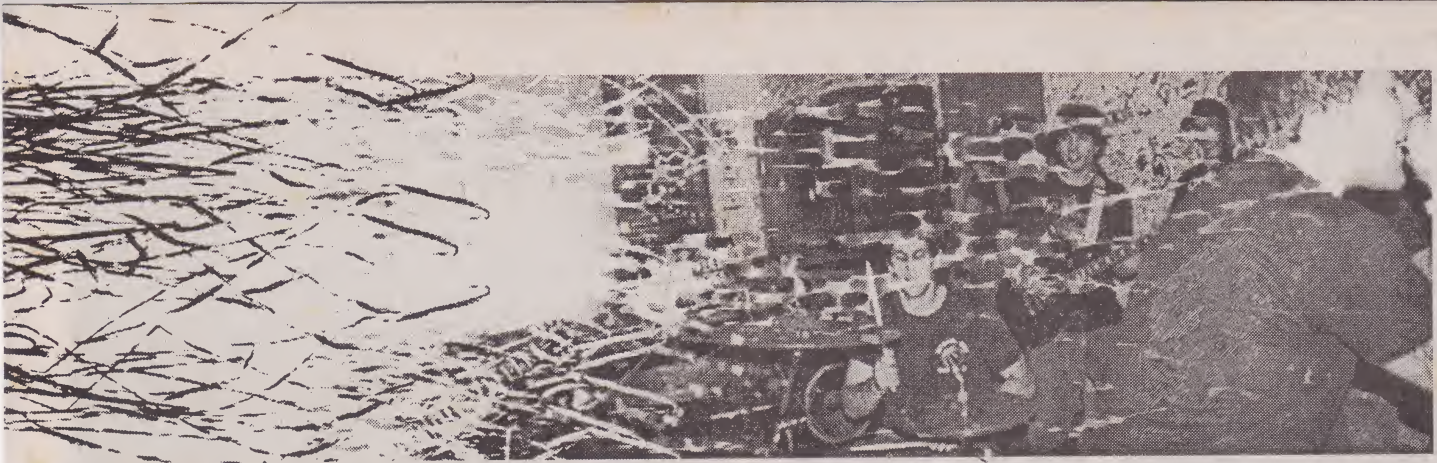
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a TRUNKFULL of DEADBODIES

A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies
By Sarah Laidlaw

A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies is a complicated band, both musically and personally. The members call Philadelphia their hometown. As the name hints, the band was created by throwing together a bunch of different members of now-dead bands. This side project turned into a life focus for its members and now creates a sound they describe as "screamy rock shit from the beach." Basically, ATFoDB's music is not easy to define, full of complex rhythms, melodies, and lyrics.

From my conversation with ATFoDB's members over e-mail, I can honestly describe them as a bunch of kids who love to party and, more importantly, love to play music. Read on and see for yourself.

SKRATCH: How did you all meet, and how was the band started?

JUDSON: The story of how our band met and became what it is today makes for some horrible soap opera. We were all been playing in other bands at the time and wanted something else to do. We started practicing [together] very casually in May of 2001 in the basement of a barbershop in Upper Darby, PA. Colin was the one who more or less put the band together. I knew him from growing up [with him], and he knew the other kids from playing/being at

SKRATCH: How do you describe your music to people?

JUDSON: I think this might be everyone and their mom's least-favorite question. I really feel like we have a good mix of a lot of different sounds and ideas. So, how about: screamy rock shit from the beach?

SKRATCH: I know A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies was started as a side project from the bands Keepsake and Revolver Method. Are you still playing in those bands? What happened to them?

COLIN: Nope. Once we decided that we were better than the other bands we were in at the time, we wanted to be able to focus on this 100%. Just about everyone was in another band when we started Trunks, but none of it ever really became a conflict—which was fortunate for us...well, besides our first drummer Rick leaving to play full-time in his band Mewithoutyou. But Sam is okay, I guess. Revolver Method broke up a few months after we started Trunks, and Tom wasn't in Keepsake for very long, either. We just didn't have the time to focus on being in any other bands. We all have bad A.D.D. and we're super lazy, so one band is more than any of us can handle as it is.

SKRATCH: Did a lot of musical ideas from Keepsake and Revolver Method spill into A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies?

EVERYONE: [Laughs] NO!

SKRATCH: Name some of your musical role models.

JUDSON: We all listen to a very wide range of music—which is evident in our failure to choose an exact playing style. My biggest musical role model is Elliot Smith. I think his songwriting and structure is fucking amazing. Also, being a guitar player, I really admire Geoff Farina. A large portion of my practicing is throwing on one of his records and playing along.

SKRATCH: What do you do when you are not playing music?

JUDSON: We all have jobs. Colin is a waiter, Tom mixes chemicals in a photography plant, Sam directs forklifts in a warehouse, I work in a kitchen, and Mikey B. thinks about cars or some shit. Besides that, we fucking party. There's not much time for anything else.

**“I think whichever
Sesame Street character
has the least amount of
musical taste wrote the
music...”**



shows. I think Mikey B. just kind of showed up to practice one day. No one really knows his story.

SKRATCH: How do you write your lyrics? Specifically, what was your inspiration for the lyrics on MY SMILE, HER CORPSE?

TOM: The lyrics basically stick to two separate topics. One is a super bad car accident I was in that left me one-legged for a few months. The other is about an ex-girlfriend of mine. I think I killed her like 15 times on the record, but whatever. The new stuff I am writing is more...well, less cutting, tying up, and drowning of her and more "the bitch is dead, so let's party!"

The world is probably better off in the end because I think Revolver Method set back the progression of independent music a couple years. Sorry about that, yo.

SKRATCH: What sort of music were Keepsake and Revolver Method?

JUDSON: BUDDYHEAD described Revolver Method as something like "metal with Cookie Monster on vocals" in a review of their last CD. I think whichever SESAME STREET character has the least amount of musical taste wrote the music. Keepsake sounds like every other band that your average punk-rock 14-year-old girl listens to.

SKRATCH: Where are you touring now, and when will the tour end?

JUDSON: Our summer tour with Anthym (CA) and Your Day Strong (NY) ended a few weeks ago. It wasn't our first tour, but definitely our biggest. The main stint of it was down through the backwoods of Mississippi and Alabama, into Florida, and then back up the East Coast. I didn't think we were going to live through some of the shows in the Deep South, but being back at home now isn't nearly as fun. We have plans to unleash another big-ass tour in December.

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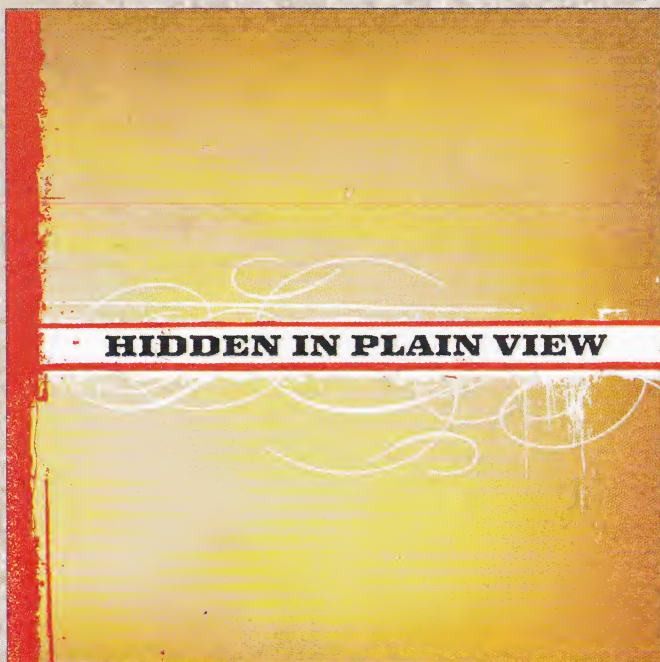


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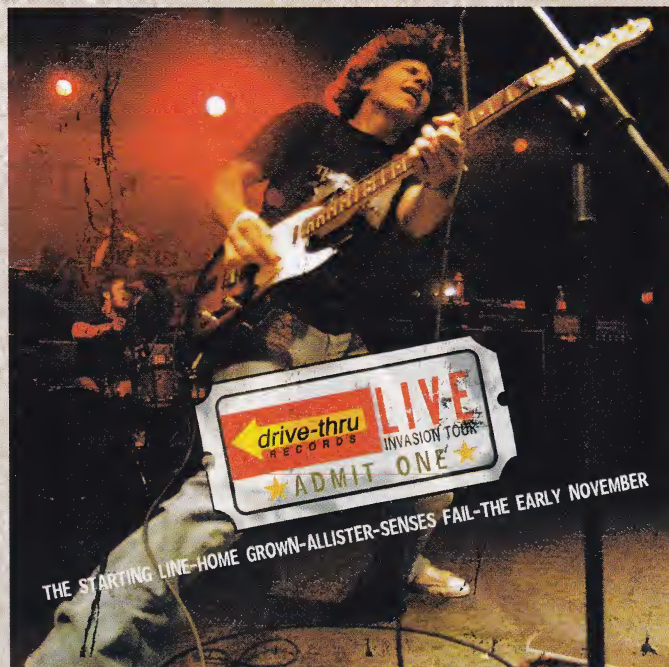
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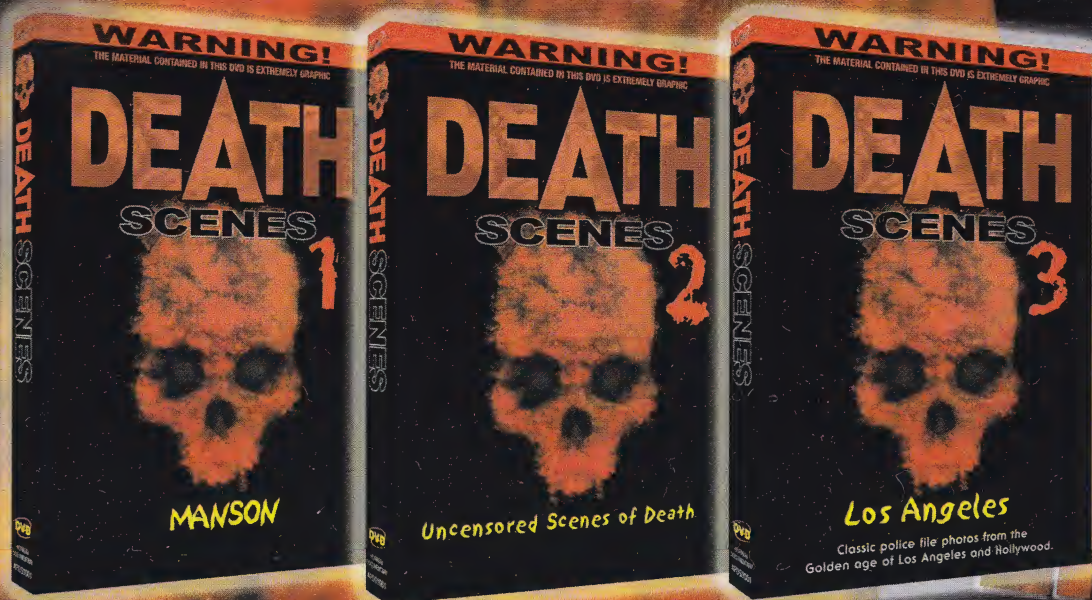
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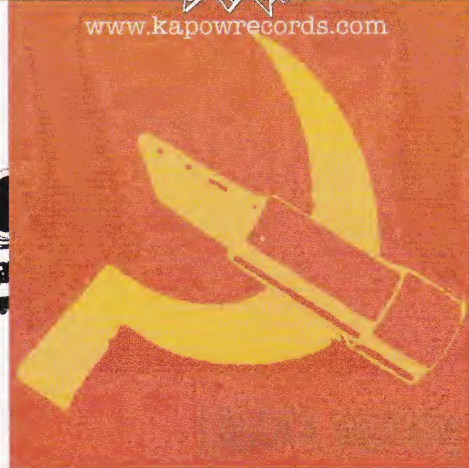
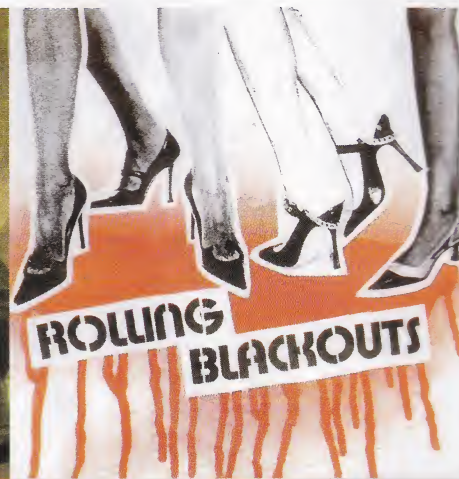
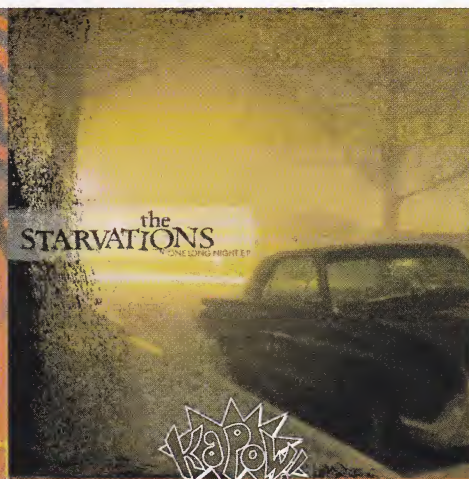
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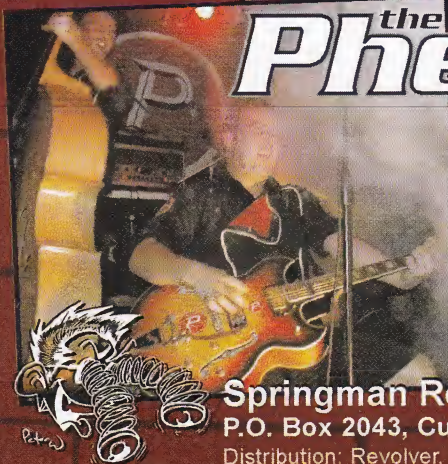
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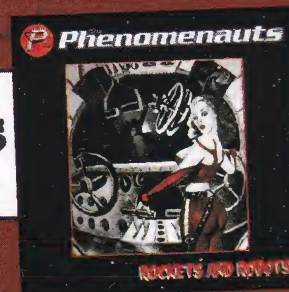
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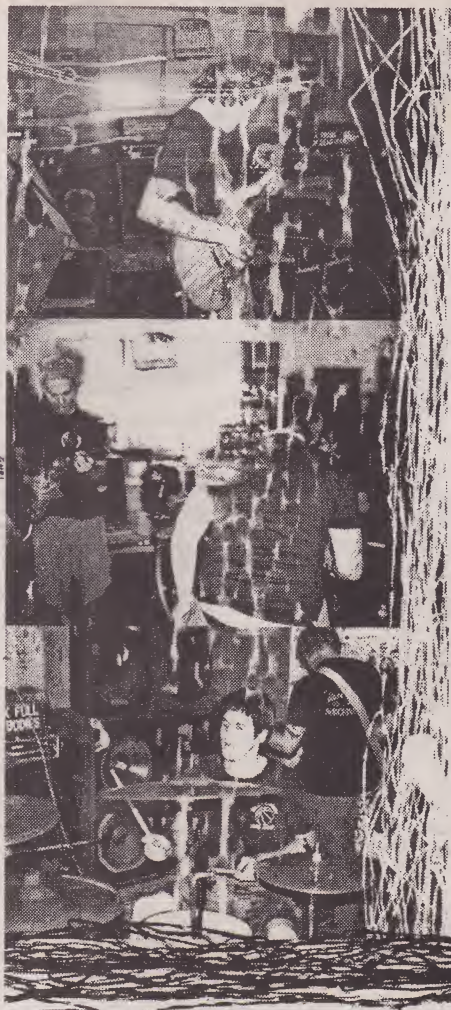
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SKRATCH: How did you decide to tour with Anthym?

JUDSON: It's kind of funny. Our first manager was supposed to hook us up with them, but he got booted before that happened. So, we ended up booking all of it ourselves with Dressed to Kill Records even though we had never even met the band before. They're good guys, though, and we got along great, which was real cool because we are into totally different things. They are going to heaven and, well, we aren't.

SKRATCH: What is your favorite thing about being on stage?

JUDSON: Since we've been back from touring, our live show has been clicking 10 times better, and the energy level has been super high. There is nothing like playing live when everyone is on and the sound is tight. But I guess my favorite thing is looking at our set-up and seeing a bunch of full beer glasses lined across all the amps. That's when you know it's time to fucking rock!

SKRATCH: What do you like to see a crowd do during your sets?

JUDSON: There were a bunch of times on tour when we would play in a city that I have never even heard of, but some of the kids would sing along to all the words. That made me feel like what we do is worth doing. I just like to see the crowd having as good a time as we are. Shit, if that was the case, we would be set.

SKRATCH: Is there a strong music scene in Philadelphia?

JUDSON: As is probably the case with most other places, it seems like the music scene has lost a special something in the last five years. But I've always thought of Philly as having a particularly good scene. The venues are amazing, and the kids get crazy when they want to.

SKRATCH: What are your goals for *A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies*?

JUDSON: Damn, we're just trying to get signed. That and tour, tour, tour. I want to be able to do this full-time and be on the road 13 months out of the year.

SKRATCH: Is there anything else you want to say to SKRATCH readers?

JUDSON: Yeah, sure. Try to come out to a show if and when we make it to your area—if not to hear us play, then to party with us after. Either one is cool. Support the cause and buy up all the shit you can from our Website (<http://www.bitch.com>). One last thing: we've been really lucky to meet a lot of very cool people in different cities that have chilled at our shows, let us stay at their houses or taken us out on the town. Thanks SO much. It really is what makes this worth it.

A Trunk Full of Dead Bodies released a six-song EP with Dressed to Kill Records in May this year and just finished a tour that took them throughout the eastern U.S. They are working hard to get heard, get liked, and get signed.

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the divorce

THE
DIVORCE

By Brian Spiegel
Photos by Justin Dylan Renney

Working in a record store, I get to hear a lot of new stuff. Some of it is good (such as The Ataris), some of it's bad (R. Kelly), and some of it makes you question the very existence of god (Justin Guarini). One day we got in this new CD by a band called The Divorce. When I first heard the album, I thought we had put in a mix of The Pixies, David Bowie, Beck, and The Kinks...but, lo and behold, it was just one album. I was impressed. But this isn't about me, this is about The Divorce. The Divorce are a four-piece from Seattle that doesn't quite sound like anybody out there. Their new album, *THERE WILL BE BLOOD TONIGHT*, is a great piece of work that deserves your attention.

I got a chance to talk to lead singer Shane via e-mail...which I guess means I didn't really talk to him...You get the idea.

SKRATCH: How did you guys get together?

SHANE: You know, the story of how we got together is neither interesting nor unusual—but I'll tell it anyway. Jimmy, Kyle, and I met through mutual friends soon after we all moved to Seattle. We wanted to make music, so we did casually off and on for a while. At some point we decided to take it a bit more seriously. We recorded our album in September of 2002 as a three-piece. A couple of months later, we asked Garrett to join just after he and his old band parted ways. And now we all feel complete.

SKRATCH: Where are you guys from?

SHANE: We are [mostly] from the scattered corners of Washington state.

SKRATCH: Where did you get your name from?

SHANE: We got our name from a drunken conversation. It's got enough different connotations that we figured it would stay interesting. Band names have a tendency to sound perfect right away, then get just awful as time goes on.

SKRATCH: "Knife

and Kids" is a very dark song. Even though I have a feeling I know what it means, would you mind talking about its meaning/root?

SHANE: You know, I take great joy in people's different interpretations of our songs, and I don't want to spoil that option by explaining exactly what I meant when I wrote it. I can tell you that there are times when a song's specific theme will shift during the writing process and that I will end up exploring a completely different topic than I intended when I sat down to write.

SKRATCH: What are your favorite books?

SHANE: Though I'm not as well-read as I'd like to be, I do have a few favorites. Right now I'm reading *THE AGE OF REASON* by Sartre, and that's provoking some thoughts. I'm a fan of Henry Miller, Tom Robbins, John Steinbeck...I should really read more, though. I feel like I'm

"...we run about the stage and sweat profusely. The crowd goes wild."

SKRATCH: How did you get Aaron Sprinkle as a producer?

SHANE: We asked him nicely, and he agreed.

SKRATCH: Are you guys friends with Vendetta Red?

SHANE: Yes, we are—family, practically.

SKRATCH: Where did the title of the album come from?

SHANE: Oh, you know...it's a pop-culture reference. Not too obscure, really. It's got a nice, sinister, elegant ring to it, though, don't you think?

SKRATCH: Who is the person you allude to in "The Man Moan"? Is he or she a theme during the entire album?

SHANE: The people that we refer to on the album aren't always specific people per se; sometime they're a composite, sometimes they aren't really people at all but more like ideas. That said, I am actually talking to and about specific people in "The Man Moan". Hopefully they have no idea who they are.

SKRATCH: Which place is "bad for your lungs"?

SHANE: Every place I go seems to be.

missing a lot.

SKRATCH: I can't tell whether the song "Hearts and Handlebars" is an allusion to society or a comment on Irish religious fighting. What is it about?

SHANE: Again, I prefer to leave the interpretations open-ended. Truly, though, I've never thought about the Irish religious fighting angle. I like that. Do you mind if I use that when I explain that song in the future?

SKRATCH: You seem to have religious (anti-religious?) undertones to your songs. Where does that come from?

SHANE: I'm quite wary of the hypocrisy apparent in a lot of religious organizations, fundamental or otherwise. I do not subscribe to any specific religious philosophy myself (except perhaps agnosticism), but I'm certainly not anti-religious. I'm pro-faith and pro-spirituality. I'm just anti-hypocrisy. Man, I could talk for days about this.

SKRATCH: Who are the red coats?

SHANE: I'm not telling.

SKRATCH: I'm not sure if I'm right with this, but it seems that the lyrics tend to talk about a bad incident in one's life that has hurt/confused them. If it's not too personal, how close am I?

SHANE: It is important to me to kind of paint a picture with my lyrics. I'm not intending to be cryptic for the sake of being cryptic. It's like all your English teachers said: "Show, don't tell," you know? If that is the picture that you are getting, then that is the picture I've painted for you—and that's cool. It may or may not be what I'm trying to get across, but who

cares? I'd rather everybody take something different from it.

SKRATCH: Who did the artwork on the album?

SHANE: This great designer named Kris Mccaddon. He's quite amazing, really.

SKRATCH: Describe a typical live show for The Divorce.

SHANE: Kyle will play a beat. Garrett will then begin playing guitar while I sing and also strum my guitar. Meanwhile, Jimmy plays the bass and occasionally screams. All the while, we run about the stage and sweat profusely. The crowd goes wild.

SKRATCH: Every song on the album is so different than the others. Did you set out to make an album like that, or did it just end up like that?

SHANE: We definitely did not set out to have every song pop from the same template. Writing the same thing over and over again would be a waste of our time and the listener's. We are intent on moving forward as a band. We had no specific sound in mind when we started this band, and hopefully when we're done doing this our body of work will reflect that.

SKRATCH: Who are your influences?

SHANE: We respect a lot of bands and artists. We listen to quite a bit of different music. It's hard to tell which of it filters into our music and which doesn't. Again, we didn't set out with a specific concept in mind. We aren't attempting to emulate anyone—at least not consciously.

SKRATCH: I love the guitar sound on "Catch the Disappointment". Where did it come from?

SHANE: Heaven.

SKRATCH: How important do you think keyboards is in a band?

SHANE: I love keyboards. They are fun to play, and they sound cool. If a song calls for a keyboard line, then we put one in there.

SKRATCH: What kind of music are you listening to right now?

SHANE: Whatever I can get my hands on.

SKRATCH: Who are your favorite bands to play with?

SHANE: There are ton of really good bands playing music here in Seattle right now. A short list of one's that we've played with: Kane Hodder, United State of Electronica, The Lashes, Vendetta Red, The Catch, The Ruby Doe, Visqueen...The list goes on and on. I really don't want to forget anyone, so I'll just leave it really short.

The Divorce will be touring the country this fall and hitting a town near you. Check for more info.



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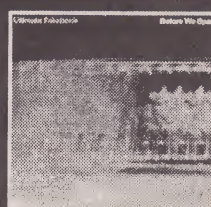
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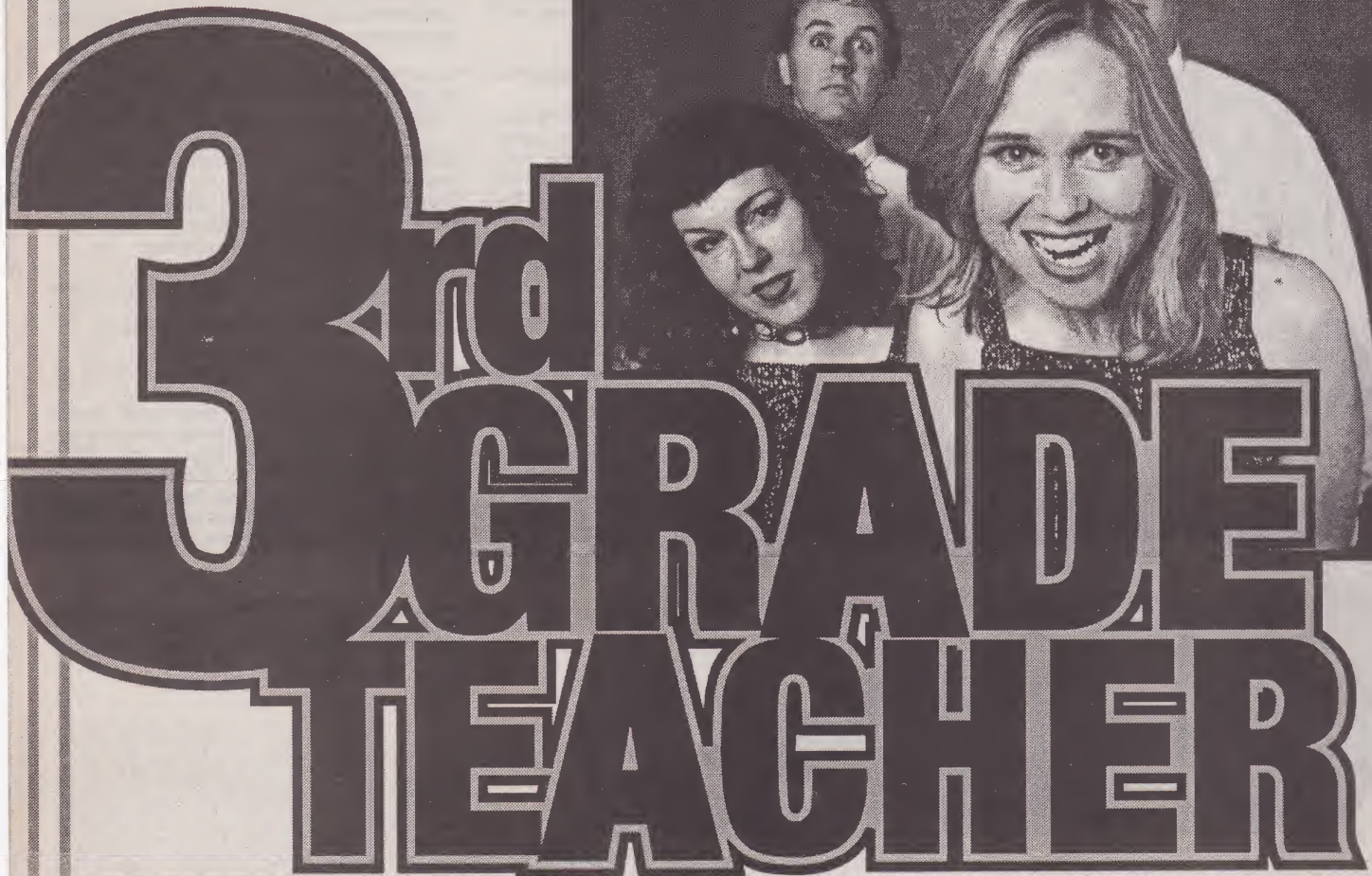


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3rd GRADE TEACHER

THIRD GRADE TEACHER
Interview by Marcus Solomon

School is in session, and today's lesson is how to ROCK! All predictable clichés aside, Third Grade Teacher is a great band worthy of attention. It is good to leave the audience baffled at times, as it shows the artist is reaching beyond audience expectations. It is good to rock like hell at times, as it shows the artist is meeting audience expectations. It is good to take everything in your mind and heart and turn it into effervescent sonic art. 3GT do all these things and more. To encounter four talented, educated, insightful, and passionate people in one place is a fortunate rarity. Give the teacher your undivided attention, and you just might learn something.

I caught up with Third Grade Teacher before a show on 6/13/03 at Dipiazza's in Long Beach, CA (and later via e-mail).

3GT is:
Sabrina Stevenson—lead vocals
Laura Smith—bass, vocals
David Guerrero—guitar, vocals
Rob Ahlers—drums, vocals

SKRATCH: Here you are in front of the club, sitting on the sidewalk strumming your guitar. What am I in for tonight?

DAVID: Lots of the stuff we are going to play is from the new record.

SKRATCH: Who came up with the idea of using the Hindu "OM" symbol as part of your logo?

DAVID: It looks kind of like "3GT," anyway.

SKRATCH: Do you ever get any confused Hindus showing up?

DAVID: That would be interesting. I read recently the Hindus are offended that their religion is a fashion fad. But so are crosses and everything else.

SKRATCH: America loves to reach out to different cultures—so they can be marketed.

DAVID: To exploit.

SKRATCH: The true underground refuses to be exploited.

DAVID: What is "the underground"? It's just people who want to be exploited but haven't been yet.

SKRATCH: The Dickies are an example of an intimate band that does not translate well in a huge venue.

DAVID: I think The Dickies would do fine. Anything that gets played on big radio is what the public likes.

SKRATCH: The public has no opinion until the media gives it to them? Soren Kierkegaard said that.

DAVID: Exactly, and the media is completely driven by focus groups now. There is no underground anymore because it's all packaged and marketed even before it is created.

SKRATCH: You don't think there are any true artists who create just for the joy of it?

DAVID: Of course! [But] it's one thing to define what is cool, and another to try to find out what cool is and strive to be that. To be sold on the idea that "I will not listen to popular music" is hypocritical.

SKRATCH: Are you trying to exploit yourself?

DAVID: In a lot of ways, we all want to be exploited, to be paid attention to. For example, in a personal relationship, you are looking for someone to exploit you.

SKRATCH: How about describing it as "symbiotic"?

DAVID: Exactly, but in a pathos sort of way—pathetic.

SKRATCH: Are you an existentialist? Do you chain-smoke and drink coffee while wearing all black?

DAVID: There are a lot of things about existence that are sad.

SKRATCH: But it is important to interpret it in a balanced way. When my grandma died, I noticed the tears made rainbows when I squinted. Do you know what I am saying?

DAVID: Yeah. But death is part of existence. To fear death is to live your whole life in fear. I am not afraid of dying. I do have faith that I am part of an eternal consciousness. I am more afraid of being torn in half or impaled on something.

SKRATCH: How does this translate into your music?

DAVID: A lot of shows are very painful.

SKRATCH: Because your fingers hurt?

DAVID: No, because there aren't very many people there. [Laughs] But there is satisfaction in the act of performing.

SKRATCH: Do you think music is mystical in some sense?

DAVID: Totally! The best music is transcendent. A good song will really move you to some strong emotions. A better one will take

you beyond emotions to a higher plane of consciousness.

SKRATCH: Music can induce out-of-body experiences.
DAVID: That happens to me on stage at every show. I think you and I are on the same page.

[Later]

SKRATCH: The band should ROCK more. I got kind of lost during the "artsy meandering."
SABRINA: The whole thing is much inspired by performance art and theatre. I like the balance between that and head-banging music.

SKRATCH: You call this punk rock?

SABRINA: Yes.

SKRATCH: Hindu wisdom.
SABRINA: Yes.

SKRATCH: Are you manifesting the Darshan of Matakali?
SABRINA: No, I read and absorb. Everything I read will become part of the mix.

SKRATCH: How far do you want to take the music thing?
SABRINA: I would like to take it all the way to the top.

SKRATCH: What motivates you to create music?
SABRINA: The desire to express myself and to write songs as good as ones I've been a fan of.
LAURA: How can you not? Whether it's writing or painting or quilting or whatever. It's that need to connect and to say something—even something silly.
DAVID: Boredom.

things we have learned. It's an attempt to participate in the angelic plane while on Earth.
ROB: It encapsulates the spiritual trance that the band and audience experience at live shows.

SKRATCH: Tell us some interesting/amazing anecdotes from the road.
SABRINA: Somebody told me I was like a cross between Kim Gordon and Miss Piggy.
LAURA: We get some great comments from the audience, how we're freaky, weird, and scary—but they come back for more! One amazing show was a backyard birthday party for our friend Dana. We toned down the language for all the young kids present, but they got so into it, twirling and dancing with us.... We rocked the third-graders, and they loved it.
ROB: Playing at a drag-queen



"The whole thing is much inspired by performance art and theatre. I like the balance between that and head-banging music."

SKRATCH: It seems more rooted in theatre—but I did not know what the plot was.
SABRINA: Hmmm! I am sure some people are baffled. But I come from actor's training.

SKRATCH: It is clearly exuberant.

SABRINA: I like that—and the ability to make other people feel what you are feeling. [Speaking to Michael Simmons of Sparkle Jets] Hey, do you think what we're doing is esoteric performance art?

MICHAEL: You have to see this band at least four times, and then you will go, "Hey! I get it now!" They came into our studio and recorded in a matter of hours. Sabrina lay on a couch reading a book about Zen while the band is jamming [with] the microphone, and when her part comes up she just picks it up and sings her part. Swear to God. She puts the mic down and picks the book back up again—even if it was just a four-second pause.

SKRATCH: What Zen book?
SABRINA: Actually, it was THE UPANISHADS.

ROB: If we don't create music, then our limbs will fall off.

SKRATCH: Please cite your musical influences.

ALL: Velvet Underground, Led Zeppelin.

SABRINA: Jimi Hendrix, X-Ray Spex, Minor Threat, Descendants, Avengers, Rolling Stones.

LAURA: Kinks, Meat Puppets, ZZ Top, Leonard Nimoy, Blue Oyster Cult, Minutemen, Parliament.

DAVID: REM, The Indigo Girls, Sonic Youth, Hendrix, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, The Boredoms, Metallica.

ROB: Stooges, Sonic Youth, and Linda Blair.

SKRATCH: What about the modified "OM" symbol for the band logo? Who is the mystic of the band? Do you think music is mysticism?

LAURA: As mystical as it gets, baby! Yet it also connects you to the physical plane at the very lowest, first-chakra level.

DAVID: It's a symbol of our desperation for a catchy logo.

SABRINA: We're all fascinated by spirituality. We like to read and study and practice new

beauty contest. Amazing. We opened for The Damned on Halloween 2000 at the Roxy. And, of course, [opening for] Weezer in 2000 and 2002.

SKRATCH: Do you have any thoughts on the current world situation? How do you like having a fascist moron with a C-minus GPA controlling our nation?

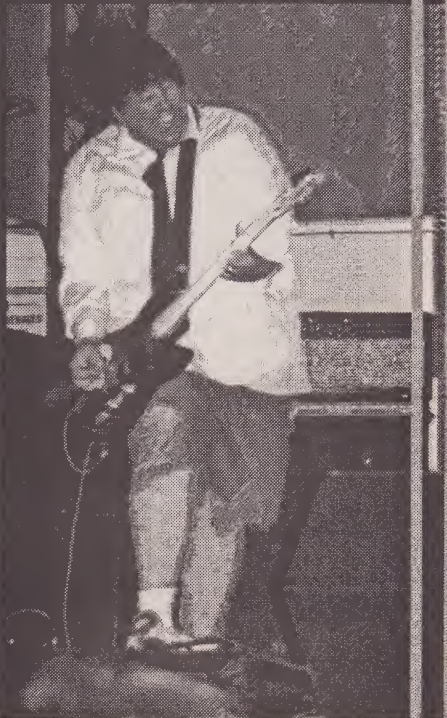
LAURA: Don't like it a bit, no sir. But after cycling through feeling angry and helpless...Aw, fuck it, ya know?

SABRINA: I stopped participating in all media culture on September 12, 2001.

DAVID: It's all a conspiracy tied into our civilization's karma on a cosmic level. It's best just to accept it.

ROB: Maybe he didn't have the right teacher. The world will survive; it's the people who have issues. We are all one. Namaste.

Don't be a dunce. Check out Third Grade Teacher live and at or at www.pinchhit.com.





"Av
hea
for

Assert
Interview (via e-mail) by Priscilla
Leiva

Assert is a prime example of the great music we poor American kids are missing out on. Ever since 1995 when Assert began to take the U.K. underground scene by storm, we have missed naked performances and one of the best fusions of punk and thrash I have heard in a while. A political message is conveyed through distinctive lyrics that unapologetically tell you what you don't want to hear and place the guilt where it belongs. Until we get the chance to see the full frontal assault Assert has brought into the live music scene, we can only wait and drool over their new full-length.

Assert is:
Adders—bass
Ryan Evans—guitar
Britt—vocals
Sean "Sicboy" Ecclestone—
guitar
Carl Stokes—drums

SKRATCH: I guess I'll start off on a generic note and ask you guys to give the story how Assert came about.

BRITT: We came about to stop us from ending up in prison. I was working for the anti-fash band Beggars i.t.a. and wanted to form a new band. The line-up has changed over the years—it has taken us

many years to develop—but it's getting there.

SKRATCH: Is there a story behind the name?

BRITT: Just to be assertive in life. It does not mean be aggressive or violent. It's all about self-confidence and standing up for your beliefs. Don't take no crap!

SKRATCH: What makes your band original?

BRITT: I think we have an original sound and style. As someone wrote in a magazine, "Assert are assert, and that's it." The band has a very "we don't give a shit" attitude—and these days even that is original! We are more about content than image.

SKRATCH: So you guys recently did a U.S. release of your new full-length, RIOTOUS ASSEMBLY. Where in the U.S. can we find the

Arizona. (Try www.maltsoda.com to find out distro details.) The U.S. version differs in that it has a CD-ROM with live footage and interviews and some bonus tracks. There is also some excellent artwork from maximum floride and a guest vocal from Barney of Napalm Death.

SKRATCH: How has the U.K. feedback on the new CD been?

BRITT: It's still not out yet! A few folks have had promo copies, and there is a major "buzz" about this release, believe me! I expect the feedback to be very good, to say the least. In other areas of Europe proms have gone out, and the feedback has been marvelous.

SKRATCH: Are your crowds or feedback on the CD different on the mainland?

BRITT: Crowds are different from venue to venue, country to country.

SKRATCH: How did the decision to embark on a tour with legends The Exploited, come about? Did you seek them out?

BRITT: We have played with them before and were asked to do the tour. We have never had a "buy on," and we have a good enough reputation to be asked to play with the legendary bands.

SKRATCH: Are there any other bands that you guys hope to one day have the opportunity to tour with?

BRITT: Assert have toured with so many of our favorite bands that it's hard to think about that. I like F-minus and would like to tour with them. Most other bands I would like to go out with have split!

SKRATCH: Any plans for a U.S. tour?

"We all have 'tough' lives from the run-down housing schemes, low-paid work, taking shit from assholes every day..."

CD? Is it any different from the U.K. version?

BRITT: The U.S.A. version is out on MALTSODA RECORDINGS out of

We just get on with it. Assert hit the stage and detonate—that's it! We try to fire up the audience and get them involved—but if they don't, we just blaze and blast away!

BRITT: Let's see what happens with this release and with labels and so on. Yes, of course Assert would love to tour the States. It has to be right for us, though.



SKRATCH: Britt, I understand that you are also a member of One Way System. Is it different touring with them? How is it different to do a U.S. tour?

BRITT: I suppose things are a bit bigger and more people know of you and so on. Maybe OWS have that legendary status thing going on, I don't know. It's more stripped down with Assert: transit van, floor space, blah blah! I take it as it comes. It's nice to stay in a hotel from time to time, don't you think?

SKRATCH: Yeah, that is always fun. I understand your band went through an incredible loss when your drummer, Chris Burleigh, died. If you don't mind the question, how has that affected your music?

BRITT: It made us more focused. Chris played on the third album, INSURRECTION ROCKS, and put down drum tracks for RIOTOUS ASSEMBLY. We had a great line-up. The year before my very close friend Matty "blanders" Roberts died. I have tried to "unload" those feelings on the stage—where it belongs—rather than in day-to-day life. I feel more appreciative of having the opportunity to play music and travel. We got faster and angrier when Chris was still alive! [But now we] will try to evolve accordingly.

SKRATCH: Was his death the inspiration for the song "Never Forget You"?

BRITT: I wrote that song for Matty—but of course it applies to Chris in equal measure.

SKRATCH: Speaking of lyrics, who writes them?

BRITT: I write all of the lyrics.

SKRATCH: Anyone who listens to your music will find in it a rarely-equalled aggression that is mind-blowing. Where do you guys get this force?

BRITT: From life itself! We all have "tough" lives from the run-down housing schemes, low-paid work, taking shit from assholes every day. All our families are little more than factory workers, and it's hard to make ends meet. It's full of factories where we live, with job "agencies" (which are little more than slave-labor enterprises). We put our feelings into the music and onto the stage. There is nothing fake about us: we are fucked up, ripped off, working-class misfits!

SKRATCH: Obviously you guys have a very strong political message beyond punk anthems. Do you think your focus is more on domestic or international inequalities?

BRITT: I like to think we are internationalists. Check the lyrics, we cover many areas of the globe. [We're] political and proud! Keep politics IN music.

SKRATCH: Did you guys grow up in activist backgrounds, or was this something you guys became passionate about on your own?

BRITT: I spent 12 years in the Labor movement and was very active. I am still in contact with a lot of those people, but I talk more through my music these days. My mother was a trade unionist. I tended to find my own way.

SKRATCH: How do you guys feel about the place that your band is in now? Do you guys feel like everything has come together?

BRITT: Yes and no, really. There is still a lot to be done, many places to visit and many stages to tear up! We are working on the next album, and it's gonna rip!

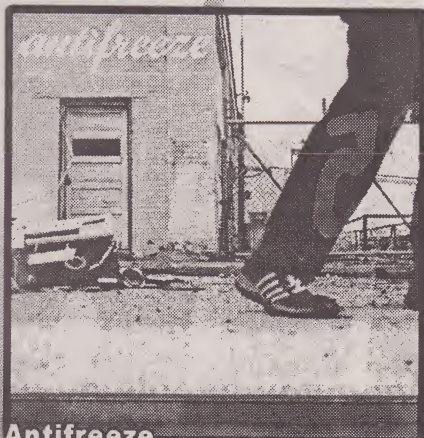
SKRATCH: What is your ultimate goal in regards to the band?

BRITT: To get respect and adulation! To make punk rock a threat again and keep the link between the words "punk" and "hardcore." I hope we can continue for a long time. It's been seven years so far, my friend.

SKRATCH: I'd like to thank you guys and personally congratulate you on RIOTOUS ASSEMBLY, since I myself found it bad-ass. Any final words?

BRITT: Bad-ass is damn right! Thanks for the interview. Please visit our Website (www.assertkickass.co.uk) and get in touch: brittassert@hotmail.com. Thanks to our friends and those who believe in us.

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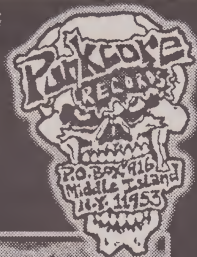
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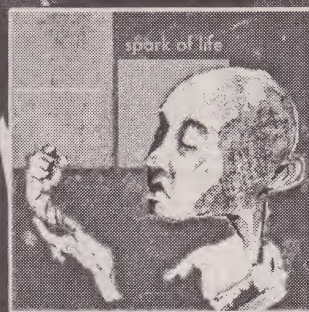
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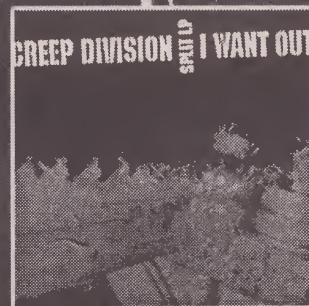
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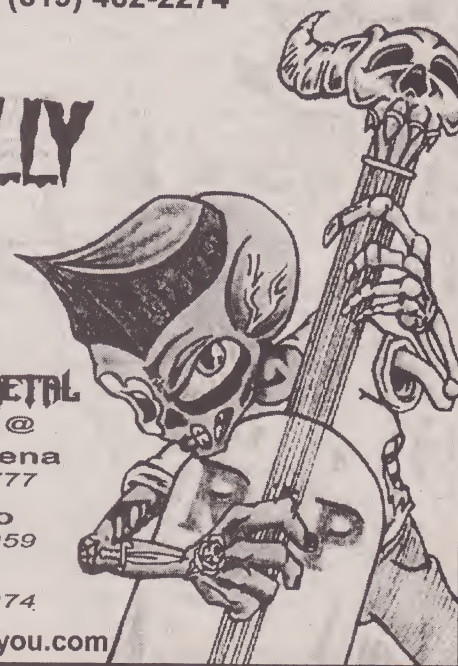
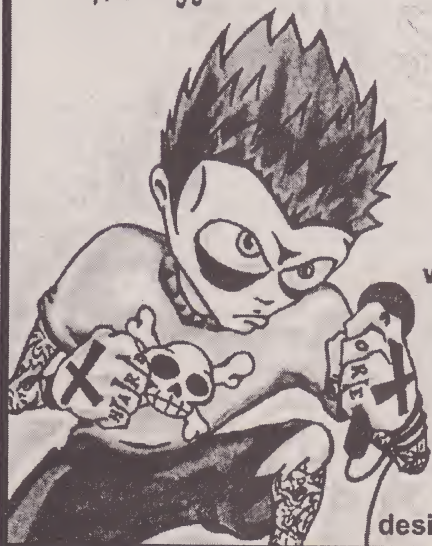
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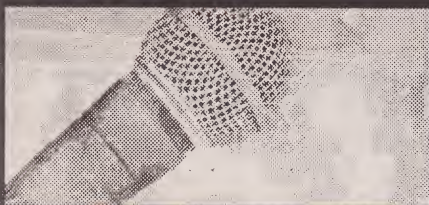
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SHOW REVIEWS



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THE VIRUS CHANNEL 3 46 SHORT BLIND SOCIETY THE HAVOC

August 9, 2003 @ the Glasshouse (Pomona, CA)
By Marcus Solomon

Philadelphia's The Virus blew into the Inland Dirtpire again and performed one bone-jarring, fun-filled show. The more I listen to this band, the more apparent it becomes that this is not just another "big hair"/style-over-substance group. But first...

Having already missed The Havoc, I searched desperately for the Glasshouse manager Eric so that he could let my penniless self into the concert. Meanwhile, I could hear the bellicose sounds of Blind Society filtering out to the sidewalk. It seemed there was something wrong with my hearing, because it sounded like there were two different voices for the vocals. But upon entry I saw that Blind Society does indeed have two main vocalists-and they pull it off well. The music was supercharged slam-fodder, quick and tight. The two vocalists ran back and forth like caged animals, each one accentuating the voice of the other. Usually, two vocalists mean some played-out rap/rock garbage, but Blind Society keeps it core and simple. Strange: whenever I think of East Coast hardcore, I think of Agnostic Front and that sort of palooka-punk; but these five thrashmasters from New Jersey are more reminiscent of early-'80s skate core. This band put on a good, fun, and exciting show. Check them out if you get the chance, and visit the Blackout Records Website to learn more: <http://www.blackoutrecords.com/blindsociety.html>.

Following the boys from New Joisey was the band 46 Short. Some girl told me this band was great a long time ago (what was her name anyway?), so I paid very close attention. Yes! Good advice. Fast, raw, passionate, and steady. This band generates more of the early-'80s Los Angeles hardcore sound for the youth of today to pick up and chew on. While it is clear that the band does not take itself too seriously, there is a definite sense of urgency coming through. The music churns from a gallop to an all-out charge, then stops abruptly...only to charge again and again. It is a good thing that the band H2O dropped 46 Short from opening for them at Chain Reaction, as the crowd was clearly into the group...and the Glasshouse is a better venue. Sometimes what appears to be a setback turns out to be good fortune. Dig it at <http://www.46short.com>.

Before I get started about how good Channel 3 was, it must be pointed out that guitarist/lead vocalist Mike Magrann told me, "You're a hack." Cool, I love to be (humorously) insulted by my musical icons. The best one ever was when Captain Sensible (of The Damned) made fun of my shaved head. With over 23 years of musicianship under their belts, the best guitarists of the evening were clearly Mr. Magrann and fellow original band member Kimm Gardener. Crowd response was slightly less than it was for the previous band, but it must be noted that CH3's music is often more cerebral than visceral-but there are plenty of songs to go nuts and slam to (such as opener "Catholic Boy" and golden oldie "I've Got a Gun"). The new songs still pack a powerful punch, but the emphasis is more on arrangement, melody, and depth. Maybe that confused the "I just want to jump off the stage" crowd. Still, there were plenty of fans lining the stage barrier singing along, while the rest of the kids ran in a circle and did the slam thing. Mr. Magrann dedicated the song "Just on You" to me because earlier I'd told him that the song had been stuck in my head for over two months and it was driving me mad. Backstage, Kimm told me that this particular song had a strong Clash influence. This explanation may help explain the song's strong "hook-ability." The band's newest release (CHANNEL 3) is epic, so be sure to pick that one up. After you are done with the Internet porn, be sure to visit www.chthree.com.

Culminating the evening with the big, bad sounds of Philly hardcore was The Virus. The crowd surged forward into a tightly-packed unit of single-minded anticipation. The boys have tuned down the big-hair thing quite a bit, yet still retaining the punk look. Gone are the skyscraper mohawks and space-needle spikes, replaced with moderate mohawks and subtler spikeage. The backstage alcohol was having some effect on my note-taking abilities, so all song titles were reduced to illegible scribbles. The one song I remember for certain was the very popular "Full Circle". Before playing this tune, bassist Drew made mention of the enormous slampit that was created last time the band played at the Glasshouse. "I remember a huge pit that filled this whole fucking room!" However, even though said circle pit was very large, it was not as big as the one before. Perhaps that was due to the obnoxious skinhead faction who felt it necessary to vent their testosterone on many smaller concertgoers. Security tried talking with the pinhead bruisers, but alas, you cannot reason with someone who thinks that hitting small people proves how tough you are. (I would like to see such buzz-killers forcibly ejected in the future.) But the fun could not be completely doused. Standing far to the right of the stage, it was amazing to see up close just how much fun the members of The Virus have. This genuine enthusiasm is blasted all over the excited audience, and the whole thing feeds upon itself. I could actually feel the bones of my skeleton being jarred by the rhythmic force. The band played an encore, but I was away taking a pee. I saw vocalist Paul backstage and asked him if they were going to do an encore. "We just did one," he laughed. "Don't make me go out there again!"

The Dead Kennedys 25th- Anniversary Show: Split Decision Loogie The Dead Kennedys

August 19, 2003 @ the Key Club (Hollywood, CA)
By Ian Wilkins

I arrived at the Key Club in Hollywood just as the doors were opening. Their was a full moon out, and the night air was about 20 degrees above being really hot. As I walked into the club, I noticed three things: the air conditioning, the bar, and a huge turn out for all the bands. The place was packed even before the first band went on. The only thing that was a real disappointment was the dropping out of Dr. Know. It seems they had a falling out right before the show and decided to pass on the invitation to play with one of the greatest punk bands ever.

The first band on the bill was Split Decision. It took the crowd all of about two minutes to get on their feet and start participating with this great opening band. Their songs were tight, and the sound at the Key Club was excellent. Lead singer Scott did a great job in between songs keeping the fans amused, commenting on the lack of beer on stage and throwing out handfuls of stickers. One of the funniest moments of the night was when bass player Jeremy almost knocked out guitarist Ebby during one of his leaps. Split Decision has just been signed with Gale Force Records and are a band definitely worth checking out.

Up next was Loogie, an Orange County band that have been playing for quite awhile. They opened up with a song called "Road Rage", and lead singer Leann really let you know she had some rage in her. As the other members of the band hammered out some great music,

she danced, flirting with the crowd and the microphone. Loogie played all their own music, except for when they did a cover of Del Shannon's "Runaway". Their set was only about 30 minutes long. It would have been more than fine with me if they had taken another 15.

The Dead Kennedys have recently replaced Brandon Cruz with Jeff Penalty. He is from Philadelphia, and in my opinion he does a better job than Cruz. Jeff is young and brings a lot of energy with him. As far as the rest of the band, it's still East Bay Ray, Don Perligro, and Klaus Fluoride.

The lights dim, everybody in the place is chanting "D.K., D.K." Then, on a movie screen above the stage, the show starts. There are images being flashed with music similar to that from 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, then silence, followed by the arrival of one of the greatest bands on the planet Earth. It was standing-room only by this time in the evening, and you were lucky if you made it anywhere near the stage. They started the show with "Police Truck", followed by "Too Drunk to Fuck". During the whole show the crowd was going nuts, dancing in the pit, singing along to every song, and (of course) the ever-so-popular stage dives (hint to all who dive: make sure there is someone to catch you before you make your leap). Peligro's drums were on a raised stage, and he was banging the hell out of them. East Bay Ray was busy...well, being East Bay Ray. Jeff was climbing up and then jumping off the speakers, making sure the fans knew who he was and that he was here to stay for awhile. About midway through the show, D.K. stopped to let Klaus give thanks to all who have supported them, along with a little history of the past 25 years. They played for a little more than an hour, then came back and did three encores. Total D.K. time: almost two-and-a-half hours. They ended the evening with nothing other than "Holiday in Cambodia". The show was so good that I'm really contemplating quitting cigarettes so I can make it to their 50th-anniversary show.

JONNY WAS HANDSOME DEVIL THE PALE HOLLYWOOD ENDINGS

August 21 @ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)

By Tiffany Chow

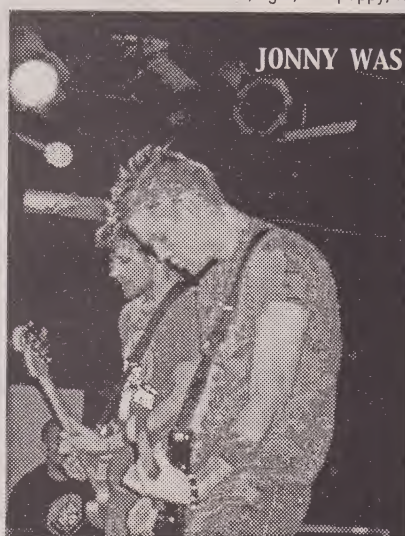
Photos by Heather Murphy and Tiffany Chow

This show was nothing short of an embarrassment. I was ashamed for my generation, which seemingly has been reduced to two words: "bros" and "hos." Chain Reaction was overrun with guys sporting sideways trucker hats and girls sporting more skin than is comfortable to behold, somehow in the mindset that maybe Shane West (of A WALK TO REMEMBER and the band Jonny Was) would choose the most provocatively-dressed one. People were "moshing" in an oversized empty spot in the middle of the floor, while people who thought they were clever sat "rebelliously" in the middle of the "pit." Despite the shameful displays, the first two bands, Hollywood Endings and The Pale, were not half bad. Sadly, I can't say the same for the co-headliners, Handsome Devil and Jonny Was.

Up first was Hollywood Endings, a youthful band of five

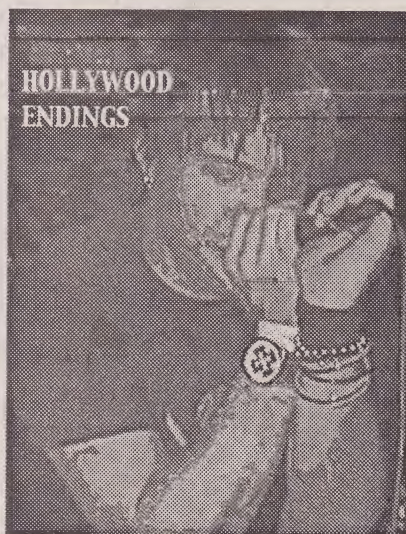
boys playing in the vein of New Found Glory. At first I was skeptical, thinking they would be just as tired and generic as the millions of other pop-punk bands trying to make it nowadays. It was nice to be proved wrong! Though they were awfully similar to what has already been done, there is something fresh and enthusiastic about them. That might just be what it takes for them to be set apart. Their melodies were strong, and they had an incredible ability to hype up the crowd. They might want to tone down the rock-star attitude and lose the fog machine, though.

Then, The Pale. I breathed a sigh of relief. The Pale was terribly out of place that night-but in a wonderful way. I had been waiting for nearly two years (i.e., since I first saw them at Koo's Café (R.I.P.)) for them to return. They did not disappoint. Playing a short set of songs off of their newest release, GRAVITY GETS THINGS DONE, as well as a brand new song, they undoubtedly won the crowd over. Their sound is fresh, light, and poppy, with



a voice that would break your mother's heart. Do you know what you're missing by not checking out this band? I pity the fool who doesn't go right now and listen to them. (I am now done with my shameless plug.)

Next on stage was Handsome Devil, a member of one of the members of Lit's record label. Does that say any-



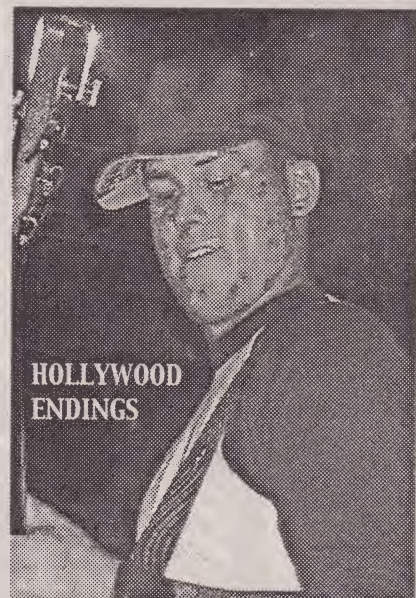
thing? Picture Mest meets Good Charlotte...well, in their late 30s. It is not a pretty sight to behold-and their music is even worse to hear. As terrible as they were, there were some pretty pumped-up fans in the crowd who obviously were stoked on seeing this band. If it's

THE PALE



your thing, all the power to you.

Last was Jonny Was, the band of teenybopper actor Shane West (who starred in A WALK TO REMEMBER with Mandy Moore). You would never guess he played



the sensitive-popular-guy-meets-nerd-and-undergoes-life-change. Appearing on stage, welcomed by too many high-pitched screams and wedding proposals, he sported a ripped-up shirt (much to the pleasure of the 12-year-old girls in the audience, I'm sure) and a Mohawk. His music can only be described as a sad attempt at Oil, his vocals a flurry of indistinguishable grunts. I was too happy to get out of there.

I was able to sustain the entire night of disgust for two reasons: 1) The Pale is [insert "amazing" adjective here], and 2) I had some good laughs.

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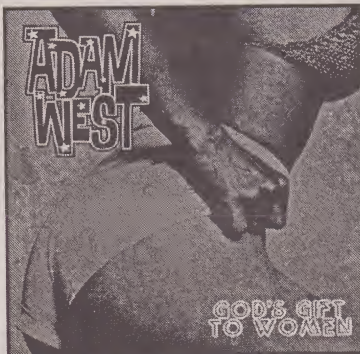
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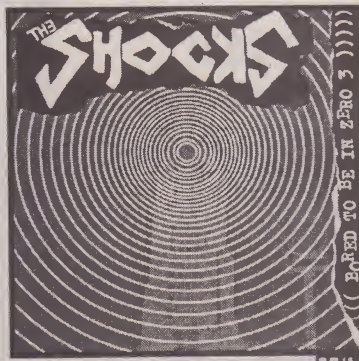
Adam West "Gods Gift To Women"

Adam West is soon to release their 4th full-length rock-n-roll opus "God's Gift to Women" on People Like You Records and return to Europe in September/October 2003 for a full-scale European tour.

Winner of five (5) Washington Area Music Awards for Best Hard Rock Band and Vocalist, Adam West plays stripped down driving less-cpck-more-rock punk.



THE SHOCKS



CD/LP

The Shocks "Bored To Be In Zero 3"

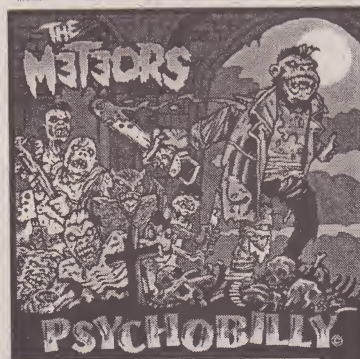
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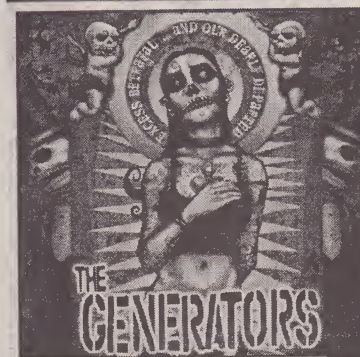
CD

The Legionnaires "Life In The Legion"

12 track debut album from the rising American Oil outfit from SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA. Although the Legionnaires are a typical Oil band they really do have their own sound, which is very close to the "grass roots" of original Oil. This eagerly awaited release contains full lyrics and sleeve notes and the first 1000 pressed only will have a full colour picture disc.



THE GENERATORS



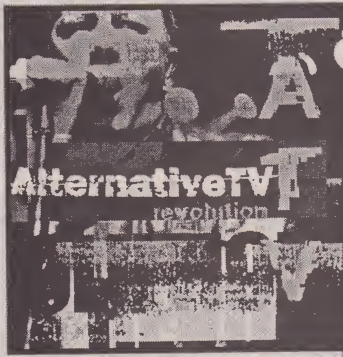
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The Generators "Excess, Betrayal, and Our Dearly Departed"

The Generators coalesced from the ashes of the defunct Schleprock. After their stint in the majors, Doug Dagger and Dirty Ernie decided to head back to the garage, with old friend Mike Snow from The Choice, to make music for fun. The Generators created a romping, rollicking signature sound that put big, rock and roll guitars into punk rock.



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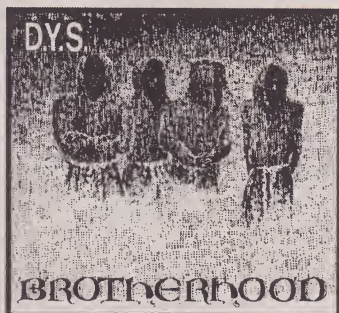
The Who

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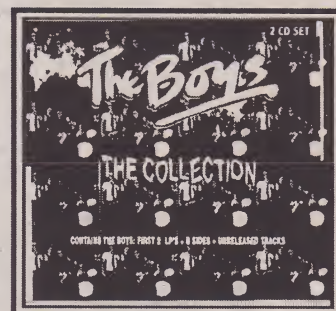
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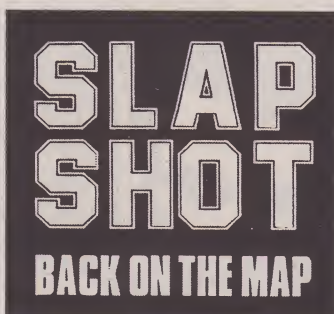
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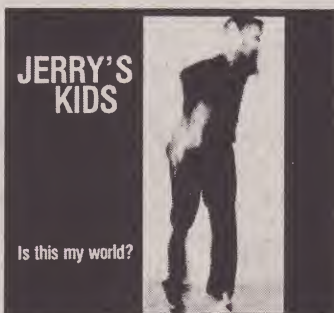
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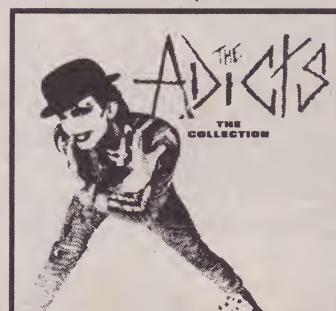
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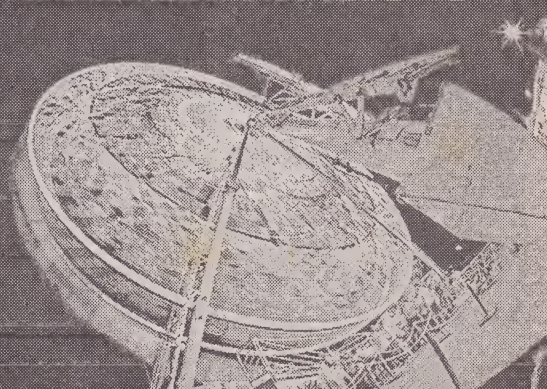
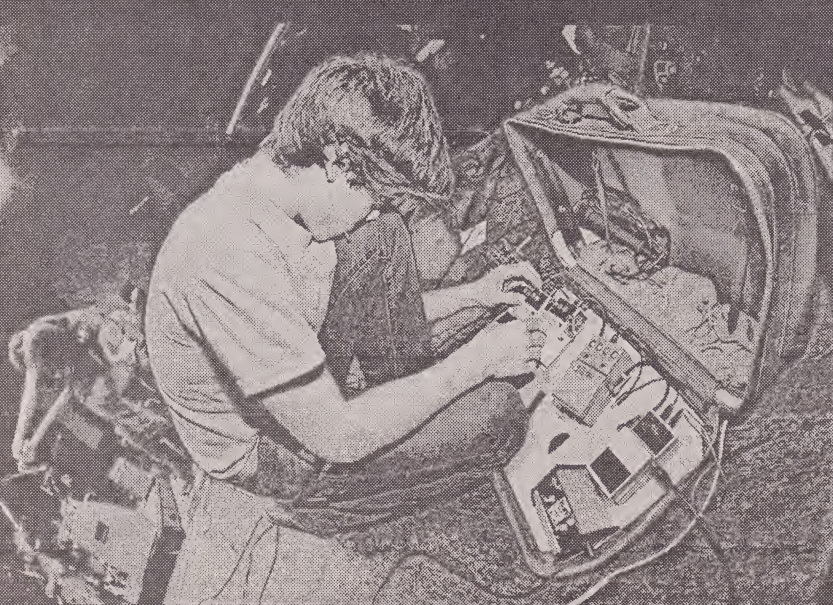
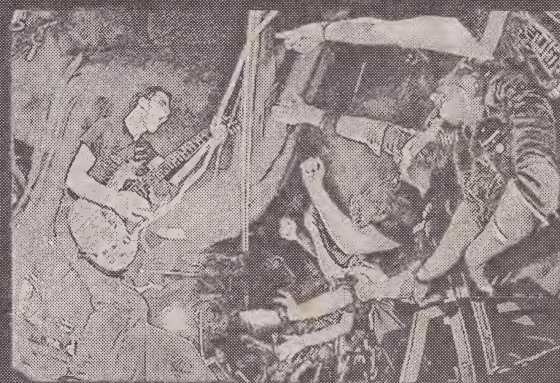
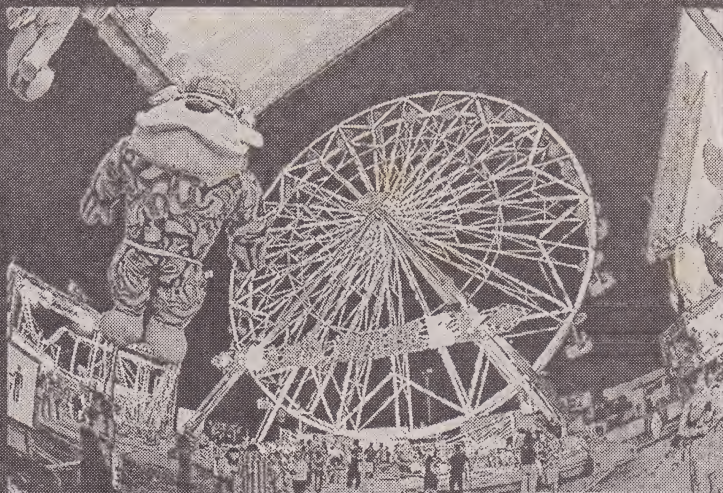
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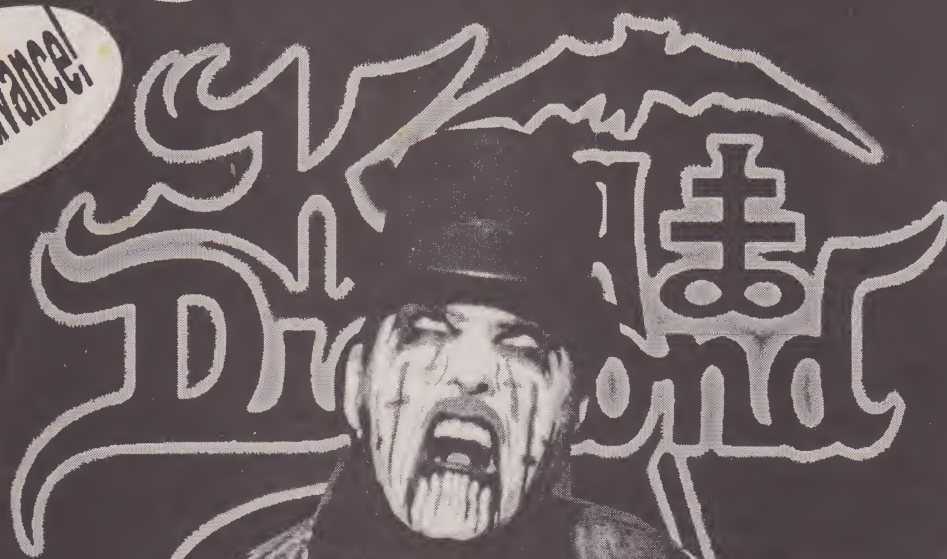
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1. Owen of The Elms 2. friggin' Carnies 3. Extol (I got layed I that night, we all did.) 4. 07.04.03
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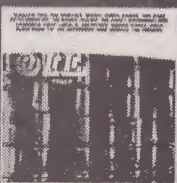
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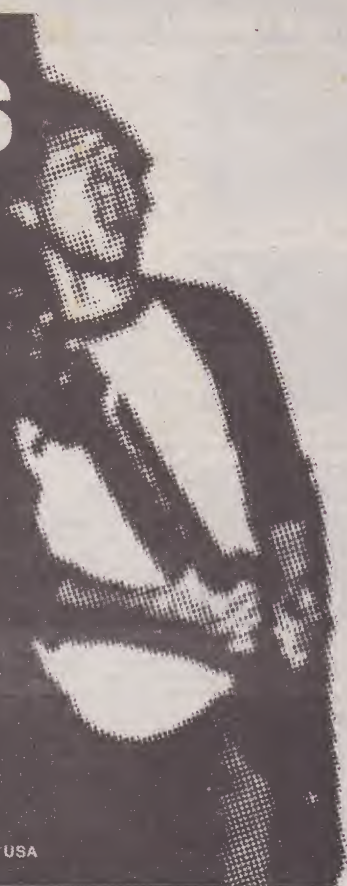


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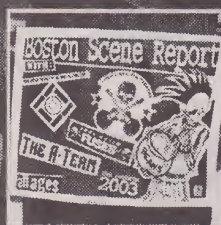
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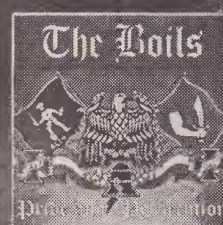
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this is what some people had to say, ok?



10 FT. GANJA PLANT MIDNIGHT LANDING ROIR

This roots reggae project with a distinctive '70s feel is integrated with Ithaca, NY's John Brown's Body. Exactly what common membership there is remains a mystery, as are many of the inner details of this reclusive group. Tapping into Lee "Scratch" Perry's "black art" sound and the pioneer Jamaica studios like Channel One, MIDNIGHT LANDING is a time machine back to the renaissance years of reggae. Damp with reverb and shining with sub-tropical sun and hedonism, this is a top-notch album with a vocalist who deserves kudos. If only

could praise him by name....

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



400 BLOWS BLACK RAINBOW REHASH

There's no bass on 400 Blows' 14-track release, but thanks to the ultra-tight groove, the drums and guitar make, you barely even notice. What you do notice is that 400 Blows uses post-hardcore and modern punk-rock approaches in its songs, taking bits of Refused, High on Fire, Bloodlet, and other underground bands to create supremely heavy, rhythmic music. The 400 Blows attack is raw, rude, and direct. Where other bands cave in to melody and hooks, this trio remains unconventional, layering riffs over beats, dually commandeering the

aesthetic and primal levels of heavy music. If you have a finger on the pulse of the underground, then 400 Blows is right up your alley. www.rehashrecords.com

-Mike SOS



6GIG MIND OVER MIND ULTIMATUM MUSIC

The sophomore release from Portland, ME's 6gig is a fierce and fiery example of modern metal at its best. Their music is a cross between Linkin Park and Tool, with a touch of melodic emo thrown in. The album is dedicated to the late David H. Rankin, the drummer on the album who passed away tragically in the spring of 2002. Raw, emotive lyrics from lead singer Walt Craven dominate much of this disc. Screamo vocalists take note: Craven enunciates every word (meaningful lyrics about death, life, and loss) clearly, and still crafts his vocals

so that they go perfectly with the band's raw power. The band is managed by Ted Gardner, who also managed Tool and was one of the creators of Lollapalooza. With great talent, a seasoned manager, and a label that is enthusiastically pushing the band, I don't see how these guys can miss. Find out more about this power-packed foursome at www.ultimatummusic.com.

-DUG



AGENT STEEL ORDER OF THE ILLUMINATI AOS

The long-running thrash metal outfit Agent Steel returns with its science fiction-based version of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden with ORDER OF THE ILLUMINATI. This 11-track release is chock full of precise speed-metal riffs, thunderous drums, high-pitched heavy-metal shrills, and everything else that makes good old-fashioned heavy metal the fist-pumping entity that we all know and love. While a few dissenters may claim Agent Steel's aural assault to be dated, have them be damned, because this bad boy gets the dreaded double devil-horn

salute from end to end. If you yearn for the days when Metallica had long hair and Halford was hell bent for leather, then Agent Steel has made the album you need to own. www.agentsteelonline.com

-Mike SOS



ASG THE AMPLIFICATION OF SELF GRATIFICATION VOLCOM

Three Surfer Dudes Combine To Make Punk Metal Masterpiece. How's that for a headline promoting the latest ASG release? This power trio melds the power of early Metallica with a slew of stoner-rock influence to create a triumphantly rocking 10-track CD. Heavy, hooky, and groovy, ASG will have you banging, shaking, and possibly convulsing to the band's breath of fresh air that's has as much in common with Diamondhead as it does with Queens of the Stone Age. Sold yet? Possibly the best band on the entire Volcom roster. www.asgnation.com

-Mike SOS



BEEHIVE & THE BARRACUDAS IN DARK LOVE SWAMI RECORDS

The pride and joy of the Swami stable, retro-soul dirt merchants Beehive & the Barracudas stumble back into the fold with IN DARK LOVE, their demonically thrilling third long-player and reunion voyage with original keyboardist Traci Haze. They've scarcely deviated from their patented scuzzy boom-thwack-boom formula, but the results are stunning nonetheless. "Whip Out My Pistol" and "Ape Soul" set guitars (and-Lucky Strikes) ablaze with bitchy vocal hollers and heaps of extraterrestrial contempt, while the enunciated no-wave skronk of

"Black Dove" reminds one equally of James Chance & the Contortions and Lydia Lunch.

-Jason Jett



BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED SPIRALS FERRET

Blood Has Been Shed is yet another New England metalcore group that lays the pain on thick and bludgeons the senses with unabashed power. On the Connecticut-based quartet's latest, 14-track release, you'll find the metal to be punishingly heavy (check out the chaotic "House of Fists" for evidence), yet refreshingly complex—a nice treat for fans who enjoy some creativity in their metallic crush. Add in the ferocious-yet-soulful vocal gymnastics of Howard Jones (not the well-coiffed '80s Brit, mind you, but the current vocalist for Killswitch Engage), and it becomes clear that Blood Has Been Shed is a potent force to be reckoned with.

www.ferretstyle.com

-Mike SOS



BLOODJUNKIES MALADIES EVIL ONE MUSIC

The debut release from Los Angeles cowboy-goth phenoms Bloodjunkies is a creepy walk through a dusty ghost town. A sepia-toned combination of folk anthems, punk rock, and western guitar enable the band to craft a unique and memorable sound. Three members of the band—Shaun Kama, Al G, and Robert Shawn—are currently members of Damnation, but the sound and spirit of Bloodjunkies is a low-bred hybrid of a Johnny Cash horror movie. By far the best tunes on this release are the full-on anthems in which the band plays the spaghetti-western theme to the hilt, such as the melodic "Raise Me Glass to You" and the free-wheeling "51st State". As with all good folk albums, Bloodjunkies include a bonus track (though not a hidden track like the majority of neo-folk artists). Which leaves the question: How can a track be a bonus track if it is actually listed on the album sleeve? Find the answer to this—as well as the reason why a cowboy would harbor vampire fantasies—at the band's Website, www.blood-junkies.com.

-DUG



BRAND NEW DISASTER MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN TRIBUNAL RECORDS

As Thrive and Thursday slowly ascend into the upper echelon of modern-rock acts, it should come as no surprise for you to discover a thousand sound-alike bands attempting to ride their coattails. Enter Brand New Disaster, a quintet who play a roiling brand of post-emo that's less white-knuckled than Boy Sets Fire, yet could take Taking Back Sunday to the cleaners if they were so inclined to scrap it out. That said, MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN certainly isn't a ground-breaking effort (the thug-sensitive breakdowns and watery guitars are virtual

hallmarks of the genre), but at the same time it isn't nearly as bad as the majority of the whiny shit currently taking up space at your local record hut.

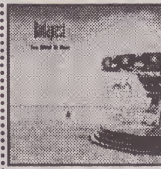
-Jason Jett



BREATHES RESIST ONLY IN THE MORNING DEATHWISH

This is sick. Sick. I am amazed by the level this band has taken hardcore to. I am blown away. This may be the most angry, loud, vehement music I have ever heard. This is the kind of thing cops should use to blow normal people out of their houses. Breather Resist is actually making my throat hurt just by listening to them—but it's a good kind of hurt. I have nothing else to say about this. Really! If you can stomach something this hard, buy the CD...but if you can't, run.

-Franny



BUDAPEST TOO BLIND TO HEAR UNIVERSAL RECORDS

The debut album from this English quintet is an atmospheric wonderland that firmly wraps its bony fingers around your throat on the first listen. When asked about the dark, moody themes that run through the band's music, frontman John Garrison said, "I only write songs when I'm in a bad mood. So the happy songs don't get written." The lush musical landscape and brooding, poetic lyrics on this disc put the band squarely in the league of Coldplay and Radiohead. Tragically, the lead guitarist on the album, Mark Walworth (who was also Garrison's flatmate), committed suicide a week after the album was recorded. Against this somber backstory, the band has decided to carry on and play the music their friend was so fond of. With a major label now backing them, a North American tour underway, and a slick album full of tremendous songs, this group is on its way to big things. Check out the next big thing at www.budapestuk.com.

-DUG



CAGE DARKER THAN BLACK FUGITIVE

Cage is a San Diego-based power-metal quintet whose latest 13-track release is stuffed with metallic goodness from end to end. Everything you could imagine from an epic metal band is here, from the maniacal screams (by vocalist Sean Peck) to harmonious twin lead guitars to all of the glory and precision of a rhythm section which gallops like a Preakness pony. While it can be said that Cage is merely another Maiden/Priest knockoff band, they add a touch of darkness at the right times to imply that there's a lot more than a classic-metal revival happening. Chances are that if you're a diehard metal fan, you'll really enjoy Cage's spiked and studded sonic assault. www.fugitiverecords.com

-Mike SOS



CALABRESE MIDNIGHT SPOOK-SHOW CALABRESE

Fans of Misfits and The Damned arise! Here is a new, low-budget sound of low-budget horror. The group even has the Elvis-esque lead vocalist and ghoulish chorus of backing vocals that Misfits made so famous in its own B-movie homage. This six-song EP is the group's debut, and it should be noted guitarist/vocalist Bobby Calabrese is bassist in The Christy, and Jim Calabrese (bass/vocals) once sang for goth-metal project Cast of Shadows. What the trio (all Calabreses) lacks in execution it more than makes up for in attitude and style. This is a promising debut.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



C.D. TRUTH CHEMICALLY DEPENDENT FOOT IN MOUTH PRODUCTIONS

It's difficult to pinpoint this Akron, OH, three-piece's sound. Sure, you can label them rock, but what does that mean anymore? Guitar-tech-like riffs surface with garage lo-fi tunes featuring juvenile lyrics, like, "United we stand, divide we fall / United we're not, just highly controlled [...] Ride this wave to the end / This ain't no trend." Why do all lyrics here have to rhyme? That's how I wrote songs when I was 16. Although C.D. truth is sophomoric lyrically, sonically they're very good, with tight musicianship. After another album or two, Akron may have something new and exciting to brag about. C.D. truth's bio labels the band as punk. They try to be, but fall short. www.cdtruth.com

-Lisa Apista



CHANNEL 3 CHANNEL 3 DR. STRANGE RECORDS

This is the best release ever from Channel 3. It has been out for awhile, but good music never becomes stale. The first album, FEAR OF LIFE, may have had more "youthful punch," but this eponymous selection displays musicianship that has aged like good booze. Take the band's cue and "Let's drink a toast to the human condition" by popping this one into your player and enjoying one of the best punk bands to crawl out of smoggy Southern California. Abrasive blues with noticeable Clash influences and a splash of Buzzcocks means that both the mature listener and slam-oriented kids will enjoy it. The lyrics are both intelligent and insightful. The only thing bad I can say about this record is that some of the songs have been stuck in my mind for over two months.

-Marcus Solomon

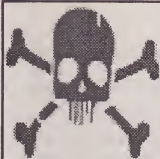


CLUTCH LIVE AT THE GOOGOPLEX MEGAFORCE RECORDS

According to the press sheet, Clutch is an internationally-known artist with thousands of fans. I am skeptical about this claim, because I don't know one person who actually likes the group. The band plays a very grungy kind of rock featuring a vocalist who sounds like he's been taking too many testosterone pills. Fuck this band. Listening to this album was a waste of my time.

-ADF

this is what some people had to say, ok?



VARIOUS ARTISTS
PUBLIC SERVICE
PUKE N VOMIT RECORDS

This is the CD debut of the seminal PUBLIC SERVICE compilation featuring Bad Religion, Circle One, Redd Kross, Disability, and RF7. This is before Bad Religion's progressive, multi-instrument debut, finding the band—like its cohorts—performing primitive, dark, clamorous nasal punk. Redd Kross would actually have been Red Cross at the time (before its required name change), here giving blood for the future of snotty punk rock with three songs that later appeared on BORN INNOCENT (Smoke 7, 1982). RF7 later reformed in the mid '90s, but this is the earliest recording I have heard from them. Disability is so obscure that I have never heard of them. Off their three songs here, "White as a Ghost" is among the best-produced and catchiest on this album.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



VARIOUS
PUNK SEVEN INCH CD VOLUME ONE 1988-1989
LOOKOUT! RECORDS

Back in the '80s, long before the big labels took notice of Northern California punk, there was Lookout! Records, a small indie based in Berkeley that signed local bands and released their material on vinyl EPs. Recently, Lookout! celebrated its 15th anniversary, and to mark the occasion it has released this compilation CD that features six bands who cut records (as the album's liner notes explain) during "the formative years of the East Bay punk scene." If we're to take this claim seriously, however, then we might have to ask ourselves, What is punk? because on this disc, in addition to the mosh-friendly music put out by acts like Corrupted Morals, Plaid Retina, Surrogate Brains, and Isocracy, there's street-corner rap from Yeastie Girlz and powerpuff pop from Kamala & the Carnivores. Nevertheless, though the styles and sounds vary, all of the 47 tracks that show up here sweat with anger and frustration. And if that isn't characteristic of punk, then what is?

-Stephen B. Armstrong



WATASHI WA
THE LOVE OF LIFE
TOOTH AND NAIL

I don't know about you, but I like bands that make me happy—a lot. This album makes me really happy. Therefore, I like it a lot. If that weren't enough, the instrumentation and melodies are mature, the lyrics sophisticated. Although THE LOVE OF LIFE is Watashi Wa's first release from Tooth and Nail, they obviously aren't new to this band idea. The album is aptly named, with each song speaking candidly of the beauty of life, whether it's going good or bad. If you doubt me, listen to track 12, "Life is Beautiful", which declares: "Life doesn't always demand that we understand / That we clap our hands / But we understand it's beautiful." Hear, hear!

www.toothandnail.com

-Chow



WIDE RIGHT
WIDE RIGHT
POPTOP

Wide Right resides in Brooklyn, and the quartet doesn't sound like either Biohazard or Beastie Boys. Instead, this female-fronted rawk outfit (originally from Buffalo) sound like a band brought up on a steady stream of '70s fuzz-guitar rock, Brit pop, and clever lyricists. Wide Right is unlike most bands, in that while the others currently jamming the NYC scene are concerned with primping and posturing, Wide Right seem content combining pop melodies and rock 'n' roll intelligence with the flare of your favorite local bar band. www.poptoprecords.com

-Mike SOS



XANIMO
DEMO
INDEPENDENT RELEASE

Xanimo is a female-fronted melodic punk band that, aside from a shitty recording, actually sounds pretty good. I am a skeptic when it comes to girls singing aggressive music, but the vocalist in Xanimo does a great job of keeping the aggressiveness of the music in mind while using her beautiful voice. I wish they would've included a Website or more information with their demo. Look out for them in the future.

-ADF

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when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.



MICHAEL FRANTI AND SPEARHEAD EVERYONE DESERVES MUSIC- IMUSIC

The newest release from San Francisco's Michael Franti is all about the world, the war, and social injustice. In a career that has included numerous top-selling albums with his bands The Beatnigs, The Disposable Heroes of Jazz, and now Spearhead, Franti has always worn his heart on his sleeve. Though the biting lyrics are the focus of his music, the curious mix of rap, hip-hop, disco, rock, punk, and reggae on this disc is hard to fathom. Eventually, the lyrics hit the listener so hard on the head that one has to give in and start humming these quirky tunes. I honestly couldn't get into the quirky, almost gospel arrangements on this album, but I did love the message. Anybody who stands up to the hate-filled hypocrisy rampant in the world today deserves support. Power to the Peaceful. www.spearheadvibrations.com



M.O.D. THE REBEL YOU LOVE TO HATE NUCLEAR BLAST RECORDS

I fucking hate rap core. Someone please kill this band.



MR. DAVID VINER SELF-TITLED DIM MAK RECORDS

The debut release from England Delta blues guitarist David Viner is an appealing piece of Mississippi mud pie that seems as out of place as a Muslim in the Vatican. With a clean, traditional blues style that harkens back to Jefferson Airplane-offshoot Hot Tuna and earlier legends like Robert Johnson, Viner has crafted a true piece of Americana that was born in an alien environment. It seems remarkable how well Viner captures the dark, brooding style of music the he's adopted. The 12 tunes on this release are all traditional blues numbers, such as "Corinna, Corinna", "Beer Belly", and "Hobo Blues". This album is for those that like to kick back with a glass of Jack, enjoy some pure guitar, and watch the world whirl on by. Find out more about this misplaced maestro at www.dimmak.com.



MURDER MY LOVE SELF-TITLED EP SELF-RELEASED

Do you wear a cape, fear sunlight, and worship at the pointy feet of Cradle of Filth? If you answered "yes" to any or all of those questions, then Murder My Love just might be your new favorite band. Their self-released EP is stocked head-to-floor with blood-curdling screams, megaton guitars, and overwrought lyrics about death, resurrection, and hope. While their blood-and-brooding shtick isn't anything that hasn't been done better by the likes of HIM or Ice D Earth, there remains something oddly endearing about Murder My Love's merciless rehashing of traditional metal aesthetics.

-Jason Jett



MURDER WEAPON NERVOUS WRECK MARTYR

Virginia-based hardcore troupe Murder Weapon embodies the true spirit of hardcore music on NERVOUS WRECK. This seven song, 10-minute long beast chock full of heavy riffs, angst-ridden vocals, and catchy choruses that scream for beatdowns and windmills. Playing hardcore like it's 1989 all over again, this quintet—which contains members of Dead Serious, Scarlet, and Down to Nothing—has put out an album that old-schoolers and new jacks alike can appreciate. www.martyrrecords.com

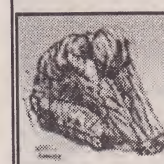
-Mike SOS



NAGLFAR SHEOL CENTURY MEDIA

The streak of ass-kicking bands to come from Sweden continues, as veteran war-metal act Naglfar's latest release further confirms Sweden as the home of the heavy. This nine-track display of hostility combines the epic swagger of Manowar with the crushing crunch of Dimmu Borgir, making SHEOL (Hebrew for "Hell," by the way) one of the loudest and incessantly brutal albums to date. This quintet has been on hiatus for five years, yet after one listen of the demonically delicious "Unleash Hell", you'd assume that Naglfar has been here all along, honing its metal craft for the masses. www.centurymedia.com

-Mike SOS



NODES OF RANVIER SELF-TITLED FACEDOWN RECORDS

This album is good, but it's not as good as you might expect. The music is heavy with melodic points, which makes the style resemble that of Poison the Well. Vocalist Thomas has a very fierce and aggressive scream that makes your blood boil, but this recording lacks something that the prior Nodes releases had. This album might either be rushed or a little too polished, because I don't feel the same intensity from the band. Don't get me wrong, though; if you like the style Poison the Well plays, then the new Nodes of Ranvier album is for you.

-ADF



OTEP SEVAS TRA CAPITOL

Otep is a female-fronted death-metal band. Yeah, you read it right—and a damn good one at that, as the quartet blends dark imagery and intimate suffering into Slipknot-esque dirges. And they do so sans the costumes, instead, wearing their hardships and pain on their collective sleeve. With enriching vocals and a down-tuned, Terry Date-produced slab of guitars, this quartet succeeds in putting out some unmanufactured aggression that's more of a catharsis than background fodder for extreme-sports shows. 12 tracks of balls, bark, and one hell of a bite, OTEP pushes harder than most of their testosterone-driven metal counterparts. For those wary of a "girl metal band," this ain't The Donnas and is far from anything else containing "female-fronted" and "metal" in the same sentence. www.capitolrecords.com

-Mike SOS



PANSY DIVISION TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT! Alternative Tentacles Records

Queer core is funny. I couldn't help to guffaw when I heard the words to "Alpine Skiing": "Grab two poles, up and down / You don't need snow to go alpine skiing!" Queer core is as honest and as confrontational as any other sub-genre of punk. The difference is that bands like Pansy Division have that tongue firmly planted in the (butt) cheek and make no apologies. Most punks don't give a fuck about social acceptance; instead, they turn their backs on traditional morals, values, etc. Queer punks arose to voice their frustrations in the straight world. Instead of turning their backs, they exposed their plump, round backsides proudly to those who turn away from THEM in disgust. I'm all for rebellion and overthrow.

-Miss Namella J. Kim



PIC SEXY PICNIC RIDING MOWER

The PIC crew has returned (fresh off their Comedy Central stint on PREMIUM BLEND) to drop another set of incredibly soulful and undeniably danceable tunes with SEXY PICNIC. The term "hybrid" is tossed around so much these days that it has probably lost some luster—but it's the best way to describe PIC. This collective (which goes seven deep) throws jazz, salsa, rock, and hip-hop into a big old gunny sack, and out come Latin-flavored jazz hymns like "Ghotti" and Motown-inspired modern-day R&B jams like "Nevermore Stories". SEXY PICNIC isn't just a cool album title, it also marks another 10 solid tracks in the pocket for the hip-hop/funk/mambo masters, whose infectious and intelligent tracks effortlessly make you smile the way only Stevie Wonder, A Tribe Called Quest, and most nudie-bar slow jams can. www.ridingmowerrecords.com

-Mike SOS



PLEASURE FOREVER ALTER SUB POP

Anytime a CD is released from Sub Pop, it is pretty safe to say that it will be a winner. But the first track, "White Mare", on Pleasure Forever's second album might make you start doubting Sub Pop's impeccable taste. However, if you can stay awake through the tiredness of this first song, you might feel your faith in the label returning. Although the vocals could stand major improvement, the instrumentation and composition of the songs mostly make up for it...mostly. There are some moments while listening to this album in which one can't help but shake their head in disappointment and disapproval. For the most part, this album will be purchased by loyal Pleasure Forever fans, but it probably won't do much to help expand their fanbase. Oh, well, at least their on Sub Pop, right? www.pleasureforever.com

-IChow



POISON THE WELL YOU COME BEFORE YOU ATLANTIC

In one word, Poison the Well is honest. Not just their music, but the lyrics, the philosophy, and the outlook of the band are all very candid. Some might take it as cynicism or apathy, but the band is just really so down to earth. They write their own bios to avoid indulgence and pretentiousness. They love what they do and don't feel the need to restrict themselves to fit any definition. The music on their new release, YOU COME BEFORE YOU, is a great exemplification of this. It definitely is hardcore, but it's more melodic than most hardcore. The songs are satirical and sarcastic, but with an air of amusement. This band is easy to appreciate because they are so honest. This album is great and deserves being released by major label Atlantic. www.poisonthewell.com

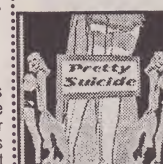
-IChow



POLYSICS NEU ASIAN MAN RECORDS

The sophomore release from bizarre Tokyo space cadets Polysics is strange, fascinating, and disturbing. The band, which is heavily influenced by Devo and Kraftwerk, ends up sounding like Geddy Lee singing Sparks tunes with a circus calliope in the background. There is a bizarre beauty to this madness, whether you call it electro-synth or creepy new wave for a new millennium. The band consists of two males (Hiroyuki Hayashi and Junichi Sagi) and two females (Kayo and Fumi). Luckily, the band sings in English...though it is unlike any English you've ever heard before. Though the music on this album consists of mind-numbing tempo changes, electronic jamming, tortured synthesized vocals, and a lot of stuff you just can't describe, this could be the weirdest album I've ever really liked. There must be some subliminal stuff under this wall of noise, because I really feel like going out for sushi and doing my hair into a blue top knot. www.asianmanrecords.com

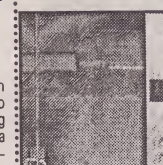
-DUG



PRETTY SUICIDE PRETTY SUICIDE PS

Pretty Suicide is one of the hardest-working bands in the underground NYC rock scene, and the latest batch of tunes from the female-fronted quartet echo that maturation. Hard rock is usually dismissed as a passing fancy, yet Pretty Suicide's infectious melodies and sultry baby-girl vocal delivery make the four-song sampler a sought-after commodity. Somewhere in between Faster Pussycat and No Doubt lie Pretty Suicide, whose cover of the Kiss gem "Tomorrow" caps off another fine display of hard rock done right. www.prettysuicide.com

-Mike SOS



PROJECT:BOTLLECAP SAVING ROCK 'N' ROLL SKEPTIC

Project:Botllecap's 12-track release has a very pitiful title. Are we to expect this quintet to grab its collective cape and successfully destroy all of the nu-metal fodder and ridiculous fashion rock out there in this great land? Well, that may be asking a bit too much of the lads. But even if the album is mislabeled, make no mistake about the heartfelt delivery and honest music P:B makes. Falling somewhere in between Coheed and Cambria and Samiam, these guys provide passionate playing laden with hooks that are way too clever to be appreciated by 14-year-old mallcore devotees. What separates Project:Botllecap from the other bands currently on every teenage girl's wall is the amount of soul put into the music. Whereas bands like Good Charlotte and New Found Glory look the part, Project:Botllecap feel it. Enough said. www.projectbotllecap.com

-Mike SOS

I'm so tired of the generic shite out lately.



ENON
HOCUS POCUS
TOUCH AND GO

Want to know the recipe for almost guaranteed success nowadays? Get together one very petite Asian girl with a pretty voice, one or two guys (ethnicity not important (although some obscure white background is best (Swedish, Icelandic, etc.))), and a lot of synthesized instruments, and you should do pretty well in today's scene. This group follows that formula. Mixing together the electro-dance songwriting of Toko Yasuda (Blonde Redhead) and the distorted, catchy rock 'n' roll of John Schmersal (Brainiac) backed solidly by the consistently good drumming talent of Matt Schulz (The Lab Partners), and the end product is a catchy album that will make you shake your hips. Go get it—seriously. www.enon.tv

-iChow



EXTOL
SYNERGY
CENTURY MEDIA

Upon listening to Extol, you'd think that they were metal veterans, as the style of music that this Norwegian quintet pounds out has a slew of old-school thrash and '90s metal in its mix. Truth be told, the 11-track SYNERGY is only on the band's third release. While the group pays homage to the days when bands like Exodus, Death Angel, and Testament reigned supreme in the metal realm, Extol also has kept its collective ear to the ground, mixing in elements of progressive metal, hardcore and shades of black and death metal. Talk about diversity and you're speaking about Extol and its uncanny ability to bridge the metal gap between your and your older brother's record collection. www.centurymedia.com

-Mike SOS



FAIRWEATHER
LUSITANIA
EQUAL VISION

Would it be fair to call Fairweather an emo band? After all, doesn't that tag connote certain qualities about a band that are considered taboo these days? Regardless of how you'd categorize this Virginia-based quintet, Fairweather's mid-tempo melodies and emotive vocals compare to the likes of Thursday and Brand New. The band also showcases an uncanny knack for textured arrangements, especially in the guitar department, as songs like "Silent Jury" and "Slow to Standing" amply display how two guitars should play off of each other.

Righteous and rocking, Fairweather's blend of passionate instrumentation should appeal to those that crave a little more than the mainstream's been offering as of late in the indie-rock zone. www.fairweather-va.com

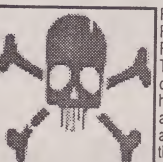
-Mike SOS



FM KNIVES
USELESS & MODERN
BROKEN REKKIDS

FM Knives has a distinct, post-punk/power-pop sound that makes USELESS & MODERN sound at times as if it were part of Buzzcocks' discography (e.g., "I Love Alone")—or that of any number of other Brit post-punk outfits (such as The Boys). The band is American, though, and derives its sound from Sacramento punk bands Nar, Los Huevos, Lil' Bunnies, and Karate Party. This is excellent, the best Buzzcocks album since A DIFFERENT KIND OF TENSION.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



FOUR STAR VOLCANIC
FLUFFER
RUT RECORDS

The sophomore release from this Athens, GA, quartet is a snotty, irreverent taste of what could have happened to R.E.M. if they grew up punk. Though the band has been together since 1996, it has managed to hang on to a funky, "who gives a damn" garage-band style. The lyrics are corny, a little obnoxious, and not always thought out real well. While the band adheres to a lot of punk stylings, the music is just too melodic to be considered hardcore. At their best moments, the band sounds like a Talking Heads clone that has forgotten how to play its instruments. While the band is said to have a loyal following of fans for their live shows, its obvious their music doesn't transfer well onto plastic. These inbred rockers need to stick to the stage for beer money.

-DUG



FREDDY & THE FOUR-GONE CONCLUSIONS
WIGGED OUT SOUNDS
GET HIP RECORDINGS

It's the sounds of the '60s! Your parents will think you're really nifty and swell when you crank this. I prefer my rock 'n' roll dangerous and sick, but even a burnout like me can listen to this and shimmy. Freddy Fortune has been doing this stuff for years with Fortune and Maltese. He's an O.G. Detroit scenester, and I give him props for getting Del Shannon's keyboard player, Max Crook, for a guest appearance (that unmistakable keyboard solo on "Runaway" is one of the most undeniably great pieces of music ever written on Earth). Of course Freddy would be the one to bring him back. It's a little bit frat rock, Mersey Beat, and skiffle rolled into a matching jacket band of merry melody-meisters. This album pays homage to The Syndicate of Sound, The Standells, The Outsiders (U.S.), Beau Brummels, etc. Mods, come and get it!

-Miss Namella J. Kim



FREDDY & THE FOUR-GONE CONCLUSIONS
WIGGED OUT SOUNDS
GET HIP RECORDINGS

This is a new project of neo-garage rock from Detroit. Freddy Fortune (Fortune & Maltese) gathered psychedelic-rock talent from greater Detroit to put together this two-guitar jangle-rock album with many guests. One of the guests is Max Crook, Del Shannon's original keyboard player. He lends his distinctive sound to the Shannon song "Stand Up" on this album with (according to the liner notes) "his late '50s, custom-built, Musitron keyboard." The songs boast well-executed harmonies and an authentic, vintage sound courtesy of Jim Diamond production.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



FROST LIKE ASHES
PURE AS THE BLOOD COVERED SNOW
SOTD

Yes, Dorothy, we are in Kansas, and Frost Like Ashes are not a figment of your imagination. In fact, this blast-beated black-metal troupe takes pages from Cradle of Filth, Satyricon, and countless Swedish metal outfits in both appearance and musical style. Blood-curdling screams, shredding guitars, and all the leftover makeup from Halloween finds its way to this quartet. The opener of this album is the sped-up, nearly unintelligible rendition of Black Sabbath's "After Forever", leaving no doubt that sometimes some songs are better left uncov-

ered. www.frostlikeashes.com

-Mike SOS

www.skratchmagazine.com

THE SHOCKER

"Sing along choruses, screeching lead guitar and built around lurid catch phrases like **Bad Brain Good Head**, the SHOCKER rings with a sleazy, slutty grace that is satisfying and built for high energy, blow out fun!"

www.shockersite.com

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SERIOUS SUICIDE OFF WITH YOUR HEAD BLAMMY BROS. RECORDS

Serious Suicide is a female version of the queers with gothic spin. The band plays an eclectic style of horror punk that I personally haven't seen in quite some time. If the group's live show is as good as its marketing, then we're in for one wild ride.

-ADF



SINISTER SAVAGE OR GRACE NUCLEAR BLAST

Sinister plays the type of blistering death metal that you'd expect to hear in a secluded wooded area while an animal sacrifice was taking place. Nine tracks of ruthless guitar-chugging, bellowing vocal growls, and a fair share of blast-beated percussive madness is delivered here—and packaged with song titles like "Barbaric Order" and "Chapel Desecration." Don't look for Sinister to be performing at any church functions in the near future. Heinous and havoc-wreaking, SAVAGE OR GRACE provides the savagery without the salvation.

www.nuclearblast.com

-Mike SOS



SHOTBLUE TEARS FROM HELL EP SELF-RELEASED

Shotblue deliver a blast of rather intriguing goth-metal on TEARS FROM HELL. Wisely, they ignore the lame hardcore posturing that has become an inevitable facet of most modern metal outfits, choosing instead to adorn their boilerplate guitars with actual melodies and sing-along choruses. A slight tinge of MACHINA-era Smashing Pumpkins can be heard on the staticky "Shatter Proof," and the masacred glam-metal overtones of "Novely" prove to be anything but. They're not quite contenders yet, but as AFI clones go, Shotblue have acquitted themselves to the scene nicely.

-Jason Jett



SOLEFALD IN HARMONIA UNIVERSALI CENTURY MEDIA

Metal music has often been linked to revolution, and no band can vouch for this mindset more than the Norwegian black-metal duo Solefald. This pair of visionaries has been making compelling music for nearly a decade. The latest release, IN HARMONIA UNIVERSALI, is no exception. The 10-track gem whisks the listener away to a place far removed from the typical generic, dumbed-down metal and challenges all of your senses. How? Well, the vocals are sung in four languages, and the instrumentation ranges from Hammond B-3 organs to male choirs to shredding guitar. How much else would you like to be challenged? For those who demand their intellect to be expanded, Solefald is the type of metal band that goes beyond the call of duty. www.centurymedia.com

-Mike SOS



SONATA ARCTICA WINTER HEART'S GUILD CENTURY MEDIA

Keyboard-driven power metal seems to be the predominant flavor of most of the bands that hail from Finland, and the quintet Sonata Arctica proves to be no exception. This band has got the whole double bass drum-meets-operatic orchestration sound down to a science, as the dynamically rich 10 tracks that comprise WINTER HEART'S GUILD can easily be labeled power ballads. If you're a fan of bands like Sentenced, Stratovarius, and even the mighty Helloween, chances are you'll dig Sonata Arctica's carefully-composed metal assault. www.centurymedia.com

-Mike SOS



SOULLESS AGONY'S LAMENT CRASH

It's always nice when an album starts off with a bang, and Souless does just that with "Bleeding Darkness", a breakneck Swedish death-metal homage. The rest of the songs are basically more of the same full-on, lightning-fast thrash that a lot of bands from Sweden have brought back into the spotlight; yet there's a nice thread of old-school stuff (think Kreator and old-time Slayer) running through songs like "The Soulscythe". The real question remains: are you up for a 33-minute unabashed metal assault? If the guitar outro solo in "Terror of Twilight" can't make you say "yes," then you're not the metal fan you could be. www.soulessdomain.com

-Mike SOS



STREET DOGS SAVIN HILL CROSSCHECK RECORDS

To be completely honest, I've basically lost faith in the punk scene these days. No new bands have really stood out to distinguish themselves. Furthermore, when commercial emo pop music is polluting the airwaves and people's ears, punk is pushed to the back burner. But I am proud to say that I have finally found the band that will resurrect the sleeping punk giant, and that band is Boston's Street Dogs. The line-up is a who's who of Boston punk rock, including Mike McColgan. Some of you might remember him as the lead singer of Dropkick Murphys back when they were worth a damn. SAVIN HILL is 15 tracks long and without weakness. The album has more of a punk-influenced rock sound to it, but these tracks are anthemic. As of right now, SAVIN HILL is the best album of the year, hands down. It's relevant lyrically, musically, and socially. What a comeback for Mr. McColgan. I've missed him dearly.

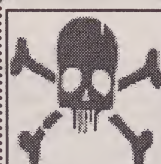
-Dane Jackson



S.T.U.N. EVOLUTION OF ENERGY Geffen Records

Geffen Records has found its new mall punk poster boys. S.T.U.N. plays a very aggressive kind of radio-friendly punk that you will be hearing on the airwaves soon. I must be honest and say that this album is super catchy. Although I am malicious toward major-label antics, this is a pretty damn good rock album.

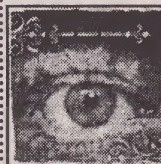
-ADF



SUPER DANK BROTHERS THE RETURN SELF-RELEASED

The debut release by California's newest rock/rap/hip-hop quintet is a hard-edged batch of 12 original songs brimming over with anger and rage. With three vocalists trading off in front of some impressive metal riffs, the Super Dank Brothers biggest problem is stepping all over each other with such an abundance of lyrical content. Their timing is good enough to pull it off, though probably best in songs like "Conspiracy", a brutal tale about the L.A.P.D.'s code of silence and abuse of power. When the vocalists actually pull together for choruses and backing vocals, this material works well. This is a promising, adrenaline-filled album by some talented musicians with a great future. Let's hope they continue to focus their rage at the establishment and injustice and not become just another misogynistic rap band. The band has a Website, www.superdankbrothers.com, but it has a few glitches and isn't always working.

-DUG



THE AGONY SCENE S/T SOLID STATE

Metalcore—that's the best word to describe this. And despite my general distaste for anything metal, The Agony Scene isn't that bad. The sound is pretty predictable: hard, angry guitar riffs; super-fast drums; etc. etc. The lyrics, however, are commendable. A sample: "And as an afterthought, she kept the heart he gave her." Don't you wish you could have thought of that first? To conclude, I don't think I'd ever go see this band live or be a fan or anything, but the poet in me still gives a superior grade to the words behind the music.

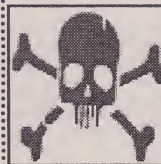
-Franny



THE APPARITIONS OXYGEN THINK TANK SELF-RELEASED

Nubile fivesome The Apparitions play a studiously laconic brand of indie rock that's unerringly similar to vintage Pavement...only far less enthralling. The main problem with OXYGEN THINK TANK is that The Apparitions aren't nearly as droll as Malkmus & Co. (their postmodern irony smacks of CNN screen crawl), and their puns aren't nearly as clever as they so obviously think they are. Their bland lyrical innuendo is adorned with a distended post-punk squall that's neither as luminous as that of The Constantines nor as wiry as theirs leaves their post-collegiate slacker rock vying for a sleepy spot at the back of the class.

-Jason Jett



THE COLLAPSE S/T INTERNAL RACKET RECORDS

What a debut. The Collapse play indie-fused rock filled with chunky guitar riffs and plenty of melody. Instead of generic riffs, The Collapse use their three guitarists to create a very dynamic sound that is both interesting to listen to and extremely complex. Another element that also creates the complete sound for the band are vocal trade-offs by Christian McKenna and Brian Pluta. The only thing I would change about this album is the unnecessary background screams that are almost inaudible to begin with and act as more of a distraction than anything else. My little gripe aside, The Collapse offers up an indie-rock masterpiece with its self-titled EP.

-Dane Jackson



THE CONSTANTINES NIGHTTIME SUB POP RECORDS

This Canadian emo-core ensemble won over Juno Awards nominators, EXCLAIM! readers, and EYE critics with its explosive debut. This four-song EP release (marked by haunting, repeated phrases) is another album of cathartic indie soul-core delivered in measured might like a slow-motion replay of large building implosions. The art of Constantines is to deliver emotional, compelling songs that never turn sappy thanks to the restrained violence of understated electric guitars and deliberately meted-out drum rhythms that turn the sincerity sinister. Fans of the early Fugazi albums (e.g., REPEATER) will dig this.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THE DEL-MONAYS DO THE UNCLE WILLY GET HIP RECORDINGS

The three ladies of The Del-Monays are astute curators of a '60s garage-rock sound. Listening to cuts such as the title track, it is hard not to believe these are not long lost 45s found too late to make it onto the NUGGETS compilations. But, no, this is original, new material from this talented throwback trio.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THE DESERT FATHERS THE SPIRITUALITY THREE SPHERES

The music is filled with atmospheric, new-age music, with a dash of chunky guitar here and there for good measure. At times, there are semblances of actual songs and music ("A Practical Joke", "Peace in That"), but otherwise the intricate guitar work is the only saving grace of this entire album. If the band focused more on creating songs rather than an atmosphere, this could be a great album; but as it stands now, THE SPIRITUALITY is nothing more than background music. Regardless of how bad I think the music is, the packaging is pretty rad.

-Dane Jackson



THE ELECTRIC HELLFIRE CLUB ELECTRONOMICON CLEOPATRA

Sweden's The Electric Hellfire Club has earned its spot in the annals of industrial metal, as the long-running outfit has seen its share of ups and downs. Now on its fifth full-length release, the quintet has successfully combined the industrial metal sound that made TEHC infamous with a chunky metal sound that has that unmistakable Gothenburg flavor. Making evil metal danceable is no small feat, yet The Electric Hellfire Club makes it sound so easy. When armed with big hooks (like on the Alice Cooper-infused "Hypochristian"), they showcase a side of the band that allows them to compete alongside other industrial crossover acts (like KMFDM)...while staying as evil as ever. www.dleorcs.com

-Mike SOS

a skull means we have no cd art, p.r. whores.



**PSEUDO HEROES
PRISON OF SMALL PERCEPTIONS
GO-KART RECORDS**

Pseudo Heroes mix elements of thrash, punk, rock, and grit on PRISON OF SMALL PERCEPTIONS. This seems to be like a typical Go-Kart release, with a mixture of politics, humor, and decent production value. Like most bands on Go-Kart, Pseudo Heroes rely heavily on three-chord progressions and furious drum beats. Don't sell the band short, though, because they're also not afraid to experiment with acoustic and heavy-metal elements. The bands in this genre are a dime a dozen, so it takes a lot to get me excited about bands these days.

While Pseudo Heroes aren't my favorite thrash/hard-edged punk band in the scene today, I can definitely learn to like this band. The sound is aggressive, the lyrics are raw. Overall, this is a solid release.

-Dane Jackson



**QUIET, LOVELY
AUTOMATA, MUSICA
N/A**

This album is really quite incredible. Two-year-old Texas band Quiet, Lovely has constructed an album (16 tracks—amazing!) that puts so many others to shame. Think Death Cab for Cutie with more energy or Pinback with more prettiness. With drumming that will leave you humbled (especially on "Demise") and harmonizing guitar parts that are truly (forgive me) lovely... can't find anything else to say. I am in awe. Please do yourself a favor and get your hands on this album, some way, somehow! www.quietlovely.com

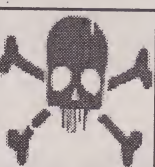
-iChow



**RADIATION 4
WONDERLAND
ABACUS**

A mix of metal and hardcore, Radiation 4's first album on Abacus Recordings is a flurry of different sounds. As the title implies, the CD draws you into a sort of wonderland and takes you on ride after ride that leaves your head spinning. Straight out of Diamond Bar, CA, Radiation 4 will definitely be a breath of fresh air to both the metal and hardcore scenes...and might be the bridge that connects the two. Give it a listen. www.radiation4.com

-iChow



**REFUTE
SELF-TITLED DEMO
SELF-RELEASED**

The backpacked kids of this world are just waiting to adore Refute. Their four-song demo is a surprisingly refreshing amalgamation of pop-punk dynamics and screamo overtones. They deftly avoid the over-emotional pitfalls that often drown bands of this type in their own pathetic tears by adding sickly sweet melodies into their misery. If you were to somehow shove Finch up New Found Glory's ass, you'd end up with something close to Refute. Sadly, information on the band is limited—the songs themselves don't even have titles, and they

don't appear to have a Website—but if you'd like to hear them/see them, give 'em a holler at refute-rock@hotmail.com.

-Jason Jett



**RIOTGUN/BULLET TREATMENT
STRENGTH TO ENDURE: A TRIBUTE TO RAMONES AND MOTORHEAD
BASEMENT RECORDS**

Both Motörhead and The Ramones recorded the tribute "R.A.M.O.N.E.S.", and both bands do that song here. Bullet Treatment covers Ramones material, and Motörhead is covered by riotgun. Both bands play fast hard rock, and this is good for the delivery of the Motörhead material...but the joy and pop-punk spirit of The Ramones songs gets buried in this approach.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



**RIOTGUN/BULLET TREATMENT
STRENGTH TO ENDURE: A TRIBUTE TO RAMONES AND MOTORHEAD
BASEMENT RECORDS**

Motörhead and The Ramones are two great bands who have influenced many bands in music today, so it's natural that tributes for both appear every now and then. Unlike past tributes, Basement Records has decided to enlist the work of two bands to do the honors instead of a variety of artists. While this definitely saves lots of money, it also hurts the overall product. With a tribute album, half the fun is hearing each band's different interpretation of the originals; but since this one has only two bands, the songs start to get a bit repetitive. Bullet

Treatment takes the honors of covering the tracks by The Ramones, while riotgun, re-does Motörhead. No track really sticks out, but both bands do cover such classics as "Ace of Spades", "Judy Is a Punk", "We're a Happy Family" and "53rd & 3rd". This CD is worth at least a listen...but not much else.

-Dane Jackson



**RUBBER CITY REBELS
PIERCE MY BRAIN
SMOG VEIL**

Wow! All it took was the first 30 seconds of this CD for me to become absolutely enamored with it. Truthfully, it's a relic, just like the band members. I didn't even need to read the extensive packet of info that came with the CD to know that Rubber City Rebels are over 30 and a product of the 1970s CBGB scene (of course, I checked the million pages of info just to make sure I was right). It strikes me that Rubber City Rebels' sound was a prototype for quite a few bands on Hopeless Records. Buy a Hopeless sampler and this CD, then compare and

contrast.

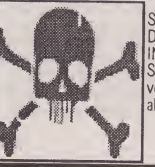
-Franny



**SAME DAY SERVICE
WAITING FOR TOMORROW
SELF RELEASED**

Same Day Service is an all-girl punk band, so of course I have to compare them to Sleater Kinney. I really hate to do that, because in its own way I'd say this is better than Sleater Kinney. SDS is somewhere between Veruca Salt and your favorite band of all time, playing fast, heavy rock and has really nice fun lyrics. There's lots of sincerity in all their songs.

-chad



**SANCHO
DEMO
INDEPENDENT RELEASE**

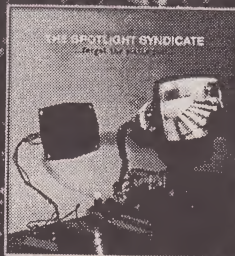
Sancho plays watered-down pop-punk en Español. The music lags, and the vocals are boring. Aside from singing in Spanish, there's not much original about the band. Hopefully the live show isn't as dull as the recording.

-ADF

www.skratchmagazine.com

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Punk at its finest: FAST, LOUD, AGGRESSIVE, with lots of attitude. If you don't own the new release on BYO, then you're a fucking piker and should be dragged out and shot with the rest of your kind. This album is a must-have for fans of 77-style punk rock.

-ADF



THE GC5 KISSES FROM HANOI/HORSESHOES & HANDGRENADES THICK RECORDS

The GC5 are working-class punk-rock heroes! They rock! This is gritty, dirty, punk at its best. Plus, this has some of the most intelligent lyrics I've heard in a long time. It isn't all "fuck this" and "fuck that," it's really thought-out important social commentary (especially compared to bands like Good Charlotte and songs like "Kill the Rich and Famous" that force you to roll your eyes and spit on them). You should defiantly check out The GC5 and raise your first in the air, sing along, and have a good time

-chad



THE HILLSTREET STRANGERS BUBBLE BATH SUICIDE EVIL RECORDS

Hey, is this The Dead Kennedys? The girl drummer kicks ass.

-Miss Namella Kim



TH' LEGENDARY SHACK*SHAKERS COCKADOODLEDON'T BLOODSHOT RECORDS

This country-fried boogie 'n' roll album runs the gamut of Southern references from Hank Williams to The Kentucky Headhunters and recalls, at points, the psychobilly of The Cramps. "CB Song" is a comical trucker imitating Elvis Presley through his aerial; and "Shake Your Hips" starts off with those John Lee Hooker riffs that so enthralled ZZ Top that it tempted them to plagiarism ("La Grange"), before launching into a Chicago blues sound (e.g., Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters).

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THE MCFADDENS HERE WE GO! (AMERICAN VERSION) AGGRAVATED MUSIC

On this super-sized 13-track EP, The McFaddens try their best to make like an '80s skater band, combining sarcasm, choppy beats, and metal licks they probably stole from Quiet Riot and Winger. But even though the sound is familiar, these Canadian punks manage to imbue their songs with an unusually potent degree of obnoxiousness, thanks in no small part to one of the singers, whose voice resembles Oscar the Grouch's. However, on "Thicker Than Water," the album's most memorable track, the band lets go of the comic routine for a moment, introducing a melancholy melody, harmonies worthy of T.S.O.L., and lyrics that are as sincere as they are harsh. Example: "I thought that blood is thicker than water / Or, at least, at least / More important than pussy."

-Stephen B. Armstrong



THE MERCURY PROGRAM / MASERATI CONFINES OF HEAT KINDERCORE

Instrumental rock outfits (and fans of each other) The Mercury Program and Maserati come together on this split EP. It's equal parts smooth, lyrical groove and jagged experimentation. Although the bands are strikingly similar, Maserati emerges as the more dynamic of the two, the band more able to handle itself sans vocalist (a precarious position given the fact that the human voice is such a powerful tool of expression). Both would make excellent full-on rock bands, though, and you've got to respect them for holding back. The record's lush arrangements are strong enough to grab you by the pinky finger, if not the throat...and perhaps that's what these guys were going for all along.

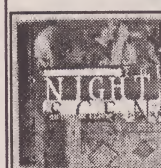
-Davie Kaufmann



THE NATIONAL SAD SONGS FOR DIRTY LOVERS BRASSLAND

File this album under complicatedly simple indie rock in the vein of Interpol, Longwave, and The Walkmen. Hopefully, this brilliantly straightforward band will receive equal acclaim and attention as the bands with whom it shares similarities. Not only is The National talented and profound, but they are also extremely unique. These five guys grew up together in Ohio and all relocated to New York, where they began The National and recorded their first, critically-acclaimed album before playing a single show. Made up of two sets of brothers and a mutual friend, you can almost sense the ease with which this band plays and creates music together. What a beautiful album. www.americanmary.com; www.brassland.org

-iChow



THE NIGHTMARE SCENARIO HEARTBROKEN AND HUNGOVER KICKSTART AUDIO

Ugh, more sub-par screamo from a group of young Philly toughs. Bands like The Nightmare Scenario have become a dime a dozen...and unfortunately, their loud-soft-scream-breakdown formula is no longer compelling (whereas even before it was only stomachable). A study in tired clichés, HEARTBROKEN AND HUNGOVER hovers complacently, content to wallow in its own guitar-and-scream-centered blandness. Until they learn to harness the impassioned fury that has propelled others of ilk (e.g., Poison the Well, Hopesfall) to pseudogreatness, The Nightmare Scenario will remain little more than totally anonymous.

-Jason Jett



THE PAPERBACKS AN EPISODE OF SPARROWS PSHAW!

Oh happy day! Emo and alt-country had a little baby. They decided to send a record (instead of a press release) to announce the arrival. How creative! This tepid record is peppered with directionless country twang and overly dramatic lyrics that give off that lovely "I tried too hard" vibe. Frontman Doug McLean's bandmates are constantly chiming in with off-kilter background harmonies, a misguided stunt that will only lead you to wonder why they found it necessary to force their voices onto the record when their lead singer has yet to find his own. The best part? Straight from "Letters Vs. Numbers": "True, his delivery's akin to a sopping wet kazoo...." Sometimes the punch lines just write themselves.

-Davie Kaufmann



THE PB ARMY INEBRATES EQUIVOCATORS AND MOCKERS OF THE DEVIL HIMSELF SIN KLUB

The PB Army is a rocking trio from Ohio whose latest 10-track release may have one of the longest titles for a non-hardcore release this year. What this group is also long on is kicking your ass, as The PB Army's songs are simple enough in a punk-rock kind of way, yet they contain those left-of-center grooves like Clutch, placing the outfit somewhere in between Suicidal Tendencies and Fu Manchu. Stoner punk? Well, The PB Army mixes dirty rhythms with memorable hooks, making the band's sound easily accessible, yet a bit dangerous, as the lyrical topics seem a bit raunchy for your kid brother to be singing on the school bus. Somewhere between hick and hip, The PB Army has mixed punk, stoner, and good old rock 'n' roll into a blender and produced a tasty cocktail suitable for underground and mainstream rock fans alike. www.sinkclub.com

-Mike SOS



THE PROZACS THANKS FOR NOTHING IRRESPONSIBLE

The Prozacs are in no rush to grow up. Sure, their songs are so shamelessly to-the-point that they seem more like parodies of themselves than anything else; but there's something endearing about music this unapologetically and unpretentiously juvenile. They play what you'd expect from second-generation Ramones fans: old-school pop-punk laden with suburban sentimentality (e.g., references to proms, chips and dip, and quitting your lame-ass job). The genius in bands this derivative is in the mind-fuck they'll slap you with, should you be so judgmental.

So much of what you'll sneer at ("You'll never know / How much this sucks, you Abercrombie fucks") will be suspiciously reminiscent of things you've felt like saying before (albeit in your early teen years). At least The Prozacs know how to tell it like it is...er, WAS.

-Davie Kaufmann



THE RIFFS DEATH OR GLORY TKO

The Riffs look as if they stepped straight off of the Cathouse stage, and the raucous rock 'n' roll that this quintet makes on DEATH OR GLORY takes us back to the late-1970s/glam-boy era, when three chords and leather were the bare necessities. Having a real old-school rock backbone, this Portland, OR, clan takes a simple approach to its substantial riff-rock style, making the kind of rock 'n' roll suitable for hot-rod races, backstreet alleys, and go-go clubs across this great land of ours. Fist-pumping and anthemic, songs like "LA Suicide" and "For You" prove

-Mike SOS



THE SHODS TIPPY POORHOUSE RECORDS

Kevin Stevenson's Boston punk band The Shods uses all kinds of studio tricks, like sound bites and edits, to dress up the excellent lead track, "A Drink to Forget". This signals that this post-punk rock band likes to have fun with its music—and thus keeps the tracks rich and varied. The music is so cheeky and the guitar can be so twangy that the result is often a cross between pub rock like Peter and the Test Tube Babies and humorous roots rock like Tommy Womack (Bis-uits).

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THE SONS OF HERCULES RIGHT NOW SUPREMA

The Sons of Hercules bust out some old-school garage-style punk rock with a slight dash of thrash music. If you like that kind of stuff, you'll dig The Sons; if not, then you won't dig them. It's that simple. Unfortunately, the band comes off as more of a jam band than anything else. Still, some worthwhile tunes for fans of the genre (and when I say fans, I mean diehard fans).

-Dane Jackson



THE SECTORS BEAT IS MURDER GET HIP RECORDINGS

Often overlooked but rarely equaled, Minneapolis beat-freaks The Sectors were garage rock before garage rock was mall fodder and MTV fare. Alongside bands like The Gories and Dead Moon, The Sectors dragged music back into the garage, injecting their furious three-chord skree with gutterball soul and a primeval ardor that reeked of Radio Birdman's sullied denim. A tidy career retrospective, BEAT IS MURDER is sloppy sonic proof that The Sectors were the living embodiment of garage rock: raw, reckless, and adrift in a sea of brown liquor.

-Jason Jett



THE TELEGENIC SELF-TITLED SELF-RELEASED

The debut release from this hard-rocking California sextet is a throwback to all the great folk-rock bands of the '70s. With influences ranging from Tom Petty to Bruce Springsteen, the band cranks through 12 original tunes that will have people nodding their heads and wondering where they've heard that song before. After all, how long has it been since you've heard a band using a cowbell? This sounds like a band that could have been tearing up Gazzari's on the Strip 20 years ago. There is some interesting trivia surrounding this band, as two members of the group were in a side project with Tom Morello (of Audioslave and Rage Against the Machine fame); and the keyboard player, Jason Federici, is the son of E Street Band member Danny Federici. The real hook, though, is the songwriting of Jason Snyder. He might as well be channeling the past with his unrelenting retro melodies. This is unapologetic old-fashioned rock, but it is good rock just the same.

-DUG



THE TELESCOPES AS APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE THE COMMITTEE TO KEEP MUSIC EVIL

An all-but-forgotten entity of Britain's early-'90s shoegazer boom, The Telescopes slunk and moped along similar paths as iconoclastic bands like My Bloody Valentine and Slowdive, yet there was always something a tad bit depraved about their particular brand of zippy garage pop cum hallucinogenic space rock. Seeing as all of their records are now out of print, Anton Newcombe and the kids at The Committee to Keep Music Evil have compiled this disc to re-introduce the world to these wracked British bandoleers. As compilations go, AS APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE is top notch, providing a broad overview of their twisted resonance, a decidedly erratic take on shoegazer that has been an obvious influence on everyone from Mogwai and Kinski to Neutral Milk Hotel and Apples in Stereo.

-Jason Jett

music that rocks is better than great sex.



LUCIS
S/T EP
SELF-RELEASED

This six-track sampler EP is supposed to be an introduction to this artist, but after listening to the tracks that Lucis has to offer, I'm not that impressed. The EP starts off with "Volatile," which has a guitar riff that sounds suspect. If you listen close enough, it sounds like it's inspired by The Police's "Every Breath You Take". The rest of the EP is filled with uninspired tracks that would fit better into a soft-rock format than with the rest of the bands SKRATCH covers.

Vocalist Don Kohut has an excellent voice that is both captivating and soothing, but the music just sounds tired and sleep-inducing. This EP is perfect for background music, but other than that, I see no real purpose for it.

-Dane Jackson



MADDER MORTEM
DEADLANDS
THE END

Madder Mortem is a female-fronted rock outfit whose 10-track offering meshes metal with flares of ambience along the lines of Tapping the Vein and Lacuna Coil. A bit on the gothic side of things, this Norwegian quintet takes the darker end of the metal spectrum and adds texture and depth without going overboard. Melody lines remain fluid while the band does show off its heavy-handed attack, but they do so without overpowering the lush female vocals. If Kate Bush jammed with In Flames, Madder Mortem would be the result. www.theendrecords.com

derecords.com

-Mike SOS



MAD PARADE
BOMBS AND THE BIBLE
DR. STRANGE RECORDS

Mad Parade may not be all that well known, but this SoCal band has been around since the early '80s, making its mark with melodic anthems about standard "no trend" topics like fighting, drinking, and resisting authority. BOMBS AND THE BIBLE offers more of the same social angst with pop-punk chords. And though singer Billy Ledges betrays his age with his worn, thin voice, the musicians that surround him pounce about like agitated 10th-graders, dropping the same deep hooks that made The Clash so accessible to general audiences.

Standout songs include "Man of Steel," "Shanty Towne," and a thrashing cover of The Boomtown Rats' (creepy, creepy) "I Don't Like Mondays".

-Stephen B. Armstrong



MALSTROM
THE STORM IS HERE
SELF-RELEASED CD

Malstrom is a Queens, NY-based metal quintet who blend the classic metal styles of Priest and Maiden with a tinge of the progressive on this four-track CD. While the production could be better, the overall idea of a hard-rocking band that likes to play in the epic style comes across, especially during the nearly two-minute instrumental interlude that leads into the galloping "Into the Maelstrom". If you dig the classic metal style, check this band out for a new jack twist on the old school. www.malstromband.tripod.com

-Mike SOS



MARS VOLTA
DE-LOUSED IN THE COMATORIUM
UNIVERSAL

I hate At the Drive-In. Yes, you heard me right. Therefore, when the entire hub-bub over the full-length that would be released from the ATDI spin-off Mars Volta began, I haughtily turned my nose up and swore I wouldn't jump on the bandwagon. But here I am declaring my passionate and devoted love for this album. Does that tell you how good it is? Not only that, but this CD is weird. The vocals are distinct and different, the instrumentation and melodies daring and bold. And still, so many people love it, musicians and non-musicians alike.

Now, that's an accomplishment! So go ahead, join me on the bandwagon. Odds are you're already along for the ride. www.marsvolta.com

-Chow



ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES
TAKE A BREAK
FAT WRECK CHORDS

Although it's good, this isn't exactly what I expected. When I read ads for this CD, I thought "R&B covers" meant Chuck Berry and other black performers of the 1950s. Instead, there's a cover of R. Kelly's "I Believe I Can Fly" and a couple of Motown hits, among other things. I'm disappointed! I wanted to hear the Gimme Gimmes do "The Twist" and "No Particular Place to Go!" But I'm over it. The Gimme Gimmes stick to the structure of these borrowed songs quite faithfully, except for the fact that they are now faster and include a couple of guitar riffs that you wouldn't expect. On their cover of "Crazy," the beginning is strikingly reminiscent of Black Flag's "Six Pack"; and on the cover of "Save the Best for Last," any fool can tell you that the instrumental beginning is "Pretty Vacant" by The Sex Pistols. Interesting!

-Franny



METALLICA
ST. ANGER
ELEKTRA

Metallica has become something of a dirty word in the metal community for the past decade, as fans and music critics alike have felt that the band has abandoned its sound, its roots, and sold its soul. Well, judging by the immortal quartet's latest offering, two out of three ain't bad, as the ever-morphing Metallica sound is again transformed on this 11-track, 70+-minute Bob Rock production. This time they've stripped it down to the bare bones and returned to the heavy side of things, showing the multitude of acts that have careers

because of Metallica's influence that there's a lot more to learn than the first three albums. And while the band has made most of its recent headlines in courtroom and rehab dramas, what remains clear from ST. ANGER is that James, Lars, and Kirk, still love to love to play together...and still have the magical knack. Rounded out by Rock on bass, ST. ANGER may not be the most precise or technical offering (and there are many flaws and weaknesses to be henpecked over), but it is by far the rawest and most primal collection they've ever recorded—a welcome return from Metallica's experimental era. This isn't your father's Metallica; hell, it's not even your older brother's; it's yours. Many metalheads will bitch, (but they're miserable bastards, regardless), but Metallica is back and ready to kick your ass again. www.metallica.com

-Mike SOS

www.skratchmagazine.com

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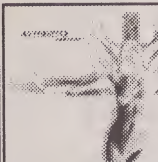
MILLIGRAM

THIS IS CLASS WAR
TRAKTOR7

If you like Metallica, then you'll like Milligram. Too bad Metallica sucks and I don't like them. In short, Milligram is trying too hard to be a stereotypical dark hardcore band but judging from their music, it seems as if they've never heard a hardcore band and are trying to improvise by bridging the fine line between quality hard rock and crap. The music is the same throughout: heavy drums, feedback, notes played on a piano drifting softly and darkly into the next song, a guy that sounds like O'Connell, the lead singer of Metallica (but minus all the hit

albums and giant fan base).

-Franny



ANTIMATTER
SAVIOUR
THE END

Antimatter, an electronica act that features members from Anathema, marks a whole new territory for electronic and organic musicians alike. This 11-track release is hauntingly delicious, embarking on musical landscapes much like an auteur director approaches a screenplay. Chilling female vocals accompany the deep grooves and luxuriant melodies, making Antimatter an outfit that utilizes the ugliness of massive electronics with the aesthetics of acoustic music to the highest order. Imagine Portishead jamming with Trent Reznor, and you may get

an idea of what this awe-inspiring mix sounds like. Suitable for the lounge at your favorite funeral parlor, Antimatter's premium post-gothic display is only overshadowed by the brilliance of the two acoustic-only reissues of "Over Your Shoulder" and "Flowers", truly showing the music's subtle radiance. www.theendrecords.com

-Mike SOS



THE AGONY SCENE
THE AGONY SCENE
SOLID STATE

The Agony Scene's brand of metal bridges the gap between Euro thrash and American power on its 10-track debut. This Tulsa-based quintet's damaging debut displays demonic dynamics and a slew of death metal's meat and potatoes; yet behind the cymbal crashes and tortured vocals lies a bed of melodic metal that gives operatic metal masters Cradle of Filth a run for their filthy lucre. Having as much in common with Killswitch Engage (whose very own Adam Dutkiewicz twiddled the knobs on this release) as it does Darkest Hour, The

Agony Scene's majestic crunch and chugging grooves (just check out "Lines of Suicide" for a neck-breaker of a good time) are the stuff that metalheads will rejoice over. www.solidstaterecords.com

-Mike SOS



THE FORECAST
PROOF OF LIFE
THINKER THOUGHT RECORDS

The seven tracks that make up PROOF OF LIFE are very guitar-heavy which isn't a bad thing, because the band balances their reliance on guitar with melodic and mellow breakdowns, adding a nice dynamic to the music. There are also three- and four-part harmonies to add some life. Since the band is from Chicago, a lot of similarities can be heard to other Chicago indie-rock heavyweights, which, again, is not a bad thing. This EP has enough diversity to keep everyone interested. Plus, it was recorded by A.J. Mogis and that's ALSO not

a bad thing. My only complaint is that I wanted more. Oh, well, there's always next time.

-Dane Jackson



OLD MAN'S CHILD
IN DEFIANCE OF EXISTENCE
CENTURY MEDIA

Ah, sweet blasphemy. Norway's unsung Satanists Old Man's Child have returned with the same fire-and-brimstone approach that has made the trio such the extreme metal delight. While this nine-track disc sounds like a lot of the other scary Euro metal currently flooding the market, remember that Old Man's Child is a veteran outfit that has recently reformed after spending time in the lair of black metal's very own Dimmu Borgir. Adding this experience under the band's spiked belt has made IN DEFIANCE OF EXISTENCE's demonic sound-

scape that much more foreboding, as the operatic style mixed with the extreme metal shredding remains a potent concoction. Be prepared to come out bloody, bruised, and brainwashed after the beast and succumbing to Beethoven's hand after a journey into one of black metal's darkest soul-stealing troupes. www.oldmanschild.tk

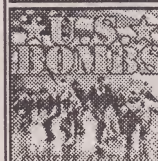
-Mike SOS



THIS DAY FORWARD
IN RESPONSE
EQUAL VISION RECORDS

This CD sounds overproduced. I doubt this band sounds the same live. Overall, they are good musicians, but the group offers nothing different than does any other band in this genre. Described as emo and hardcore, they actually sound like rock to me. If you like overproduced, trendy, commercial/MTV rock, then this is the CD for you!

-Liz D.



U.S. BOMBS
COVERT ACTION
HELLCAT RECORDS

West Coast punk legend Duane Peters leads his band through rousing street-punk songs that beg a sing-along. It is amazing how after so many years U.S. Bombs can continue to create such great, old-school punk. The group is also political, but covering topics most other political bands are not covering at the moment, as on "Croatia Breaks" and the inflammatory Oklahoma City bombing song, "Framed".

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

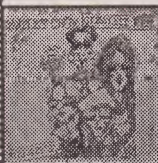


LAMB OF GOD
AS THE PALACES BURN
PROSTHETIC

Lamb of God is quite possibly one of the most brutal bands to emanate from the United States metal scene, and the latest release from this Virginia quintet only solidifies the band's staunch ascension to the throne of metal. AS THE PALACES BURN is as intricate as Meshuggah, as punishing as The Haunted, and at times as groovy as Pantera's seminal VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER. This 10-track endeavor smokes from start to finish; and with producer Devin Townsend at the helm, the production is crisp, without sacrificing the pulsating

rhythms and sheer sonic assault. Forcefully taking the torch for its own to run with, Lamb of God's devastating new album should appease anyone that craves crushing metal, as well as thrust the outfit among the upper echelon of metal's elite. www.prostheticrecords.com

-Mike SOS

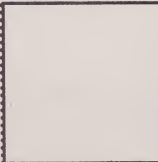


MÖTLEY CRÜE
GREATEST HITS
MÖTLEY RECORDS/SHIP-O RECORDS

This is the first greatest-hits package from the long-lived, popular metal act Mötley Crüe. The group eventually became a pale imitation of itself, but this CD captures the highlights: "Shout at the Devil '97", "Looks that Kill", and the band's cover of "Smokin' in the Boys Room". Most heavily represented are the band's MTV-era tracks from the albums GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS and DR. FEELGOOD, when Mötley Crüe was leading the spandex assault. Haring this album and looking back on it all, one is compelled to ask: "After this, we still needed Guns

N' Roses?"

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



ICHABOD
LET THE BAD TIMES ROLL
BLACK LOCUST

Ichabod is an edgy New England-based outfit whose eight-track release (produced by Today Is the Day's Steve Austin) portrays the bleakness of an industrial wasteland. Ichabod rates right up there with Clutch, Sixty Watt Shaman, and Karma to Burn as wranglers of the left-of-center noise patrol. Ranging at times from Seattle grunge to crusty doom rock and hitting all points in between, Ichabod takes you through the plight of the middle-class rock 'n' rolling American male, complete with hallucinogenic musical interludes, fits of sonic

rage, and a solid stoner-rock backbone that gives Ichabod's fuzzy metal all of its undeniable charm. www.ichabodrocks.com

-Mike SOS



THE SICK LIPSTICK
STING STING STING
TIGER STYLE RECORDS

When it comes to Tiger Style Records, I think it is really hit and miss. The Sick Lipstick is definitely a miss. Electro art rock has never been so horrible. The vocals are just too irritating to try to give this album a chance, reminding me a great deal of Melt Banana or 14 Year Old Girls. If that is what you are into, you may like this but the music gets on my nerves a little. There seems to be a good deal of hype about this new album just do not get it at all...and frankly, I think I would rather be left in the dark.

-Dr. Gabe Folliis



CULTURE
WORLD PEACE
HEART BEAT RECORDS

Where evil abounds, the righteous shall rise up. There has never been a better time than now for legendary irie lion Joe Hill to rise up and be heard. After 30 years of fiery performances in which the charismatic Hill railed against war and oppression, he has returned in the new millennium with his apocalyptic vision intact. On the newest Culture release, Hill is backed by The Firehouse Crew and Shaggy's band on 13 new cuts. The best cuts on the new disc are the opening track "Sweet Freedom", a wistful and melodic tune backed with a soulful chorus;

and the chilling "World Peace", a song Bush the Lesser should be forced to listen to every night before going to bed. There are more than a few songs with Biblical imagery (such as "Babylon Falling" and "Holy Mount Zion"), but the Rastafarian always takes time to praise God in his own way (with tunes like "Bud a Bawl"). This may not be a perfect album nor Culture's best, but it does come like a holy shout-out for sanity at a time when it is badly needed. Take the time to experience some of the best roots reggae has to offer and walk in Jah light.

-DUG



AS TALL AS LIONS
BLOOD AND APHORISMS
SELF-RELEASED CD

Long Island has been a hotbed for indie music as of late, as The Movielife and Taking Back Sunday have recently toppled the bespectacled indie-rock world with their collective suburban musical plights and pitfalls. There's another Long Island band to add to this list of those taking the ball and running with it, and its name is As Tall as Lions. ATAL's latest, six-song jaunt showcases a sensitive rock band that grew up watching John Hughes movies and listening to modern rock, new wave, and a smattering of classic rock (a staple if you live on the

Island). What the four guys that comprise ATAL do with it, however, makes all of the difference, as they mix melodies of Morrissey with the emotive tendencies of early U2 to create a new form of rock that intertwines moxie rock with the current wave of emo and punk rock that has infiltrated the malls of America. There's an urgency to As Tall as Lions, as the band's anthemic tunes are laced with emotional twists and a punk-rock purpose that should find this band in the same company as its aforementioned neighbors soon. www.astallaslions.com

-Mike SOS

**q and not u
black eyes
antelope**

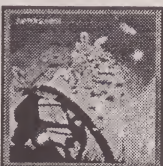
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you look like a dumbass with headphones on.



JOBOJ
X
QUAD RECORDS
The fourth release from Joboj (a.k.a. Joe Bochar) is a guitar player's dream album. With an instrumental disc that combines blistering rock, eclectic jazz, and relentless speed guitar, Joboj takes the listener for a white-knuckle ride that barely gives the listener a chance to catch a breath. The album sounds like an updated version of Jeff Beck's legendary BLOW BY BLOW or WIRED releases from the '70s. One of the most remarkable things about the disc is that Joboj played all the instruments, wrote all the songs, and recorded everything in his home studio. This is the ultimate, definitive DIY release for a guitar player. Instead of a press release, Joboj sends out a copy of his Clinical Diagnosis Report. That ought to give us some insight to this inspired insanity.

-DUG



JUPITER SUNRISE
ACOUSTIC DEMO
SELF-RELEASED
This four-song acoustic demo includes some of the tunes on its soon-to-be-released debut full-length CD, which will be in the stores in September of 2003. The Los Angeles-based foursome plays a healthy dose of feel-good pop in the vein of the RX Bandits. Their vocals are stellar. However, other than the single "Arthur Nix" that leads off this demo, the songs seem to need a kick in the ass. These emo-styled tunes are the type of songs young girls love, and, from viewing the band's Website, it looks as if these guys have hit on a sure-fire strategy for wooing women. Most of the e-mails on the site were from very young-sounding girls all about hugging the band, waiting for the band at a show to give them hugs, or hugging a pillow and wishing it were a member of the band. Damn, I don't know if these guys are over 18, but it sounds like trouble in the wings. The life of a rock star is fraught with danger. You can download a few of the band's tunes at their huggable Website, www.jupitersunrise.net.

-DUG



KING'S X
BLACK LIKE SUNDAY
METAL BLADE
Have this Texas trio slowed down at all? It seems as if every time we turn around, Ty, Doug, and Jerry have put out another album, whether it be a solo project, something collaborative, or another full-fledged King's X project. This time around, the three get back in the swing of things and deliver 14 new songs that showcase that classic King's X sound that we've loved since the mid '80s. Having worked together for so long, these guys have perfected the art of groove rock (just check out "Bad Luck" for an example) with a penchant for Beatles-esque harmonies, like the spacious "Two". Although massive fame has always eluded them, it's high time that King's X garnishes the credit the band richly deserves. Always working and usually on tour, this veteran rock act truly embodies the rock 'n' roll spirit; and BLACK LIKE SUNDAY brings it all back to what matters: the music. www.metalblade.com

-Mike SOS



KONPTION FIT
STRAIGHT FROM THE HOOD
SELF-RELEASED
For being "straight from the hood," this band certainly sounds an awful lot like later Guttermouth—only not as funny or interesting or lyrically capable. The music, however, is pretty good. I found myself tapping my foot to the second song. If you like Guttermouth and other bands who sound like them, invest in a Konption Fit CD...but keep in mind that it's just not the real thing.

-Franny



LAKE TROUT
ANOTHER ONE LOST
PALM PICTURES
This album is weird. Good, but weird. Lots of electronic influences and experimentation are heavily evident on this album from quintet Lake Trout, who hail from Baltimore, MD. It is really hard to categorize this band; they really seem to avoid any sort of definitions. One thing that can be said for sure is that they have focus. There's no way a band can produce a record this tight and so unique without being completely focused on what they want to do. Lake Trout has plenty of potential to go to bigger and brighter places with this album. Get in on the fad before it happens and buy your copy now! www.laketroutrout.com

-Chow



LEYTON BUZZARDS
THE PUNK COLLECTION
AHOY
This collection of Leyton Buzzards punk tracks starts off with a bang, the lead track being their '78 debut, the anthemic Small Wonder Records single "19 & Mad". Things get more bitter with the suicidal "Youthanasia". What really gets things going is the bouncy, jubilant ode to bar nights "Saturday Night Beneath the Plastic Palm Trees". This is the Leyton Buzzards spectrum, from proto-Oil, working-class street punk to dub-influenced melodic punk that recalls The Clash.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



LIGHTWEIGHT HOLIDAY
LIGHTWEIGHT HOLIDAY
PORTERHOUSE
Lightweight Holiday, indeed. This album of buoyant indie pop features multiple members of the male quartet singing cheery ditties, a bevy of guitars filling out the sound. There's nothing heavy here; these are all light and airy songs to lighten your mood. It is from Cincinnati that this ensemble hails, and they place themselves on the Ohio rock spectrum equidistant from the guitar-punk assault of The Dead Boys and the sophisticated songwriting of The Pretenders.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



LIMECELL
IT'S GONNA GET UGLY
TKO
What happens when you cross five Philadelphia men with NWOBHM and early-'80s punk rock? The latest 13-track release from Limecell proves that it's going to get ugly. And ugly it is, as the hard-core punk-rock rage mixed with Motorhead, Agnostic Front, and Black Flag is enough to make you raise your fist and yell. Limecell is a real band that looks like five blue-collar guys who could be sitting at your local bar watching MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL...but when they get together, out come the snarling guitars and the devil-may-care attitude that fuels their potent punk-rock mix. www.tkorecords.com

-Mike SOS

www.skratchmagazine.com

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are band names getting worse, or is it me?



THE THREATS TWELVE PUNK MOVES DR. STRANGE RECORDS

A great new release from the hard-drinkin' and harder-playin' old-schoolers from Scotland! Try to imagine if The Exploited were intelligent and had a bit more substance. Both bands are from land of the Loch Ness monster, so it is no surprise they sound similar, but I will go out on a limb and say that The Threats are the better band. If only they had stuck with it over the years instead of disbanding for whatever reason. Well, the drunken Scots are back with a bang, and this disc is chock full of infectious anthems that will have you singing along and shaking your fist in the air in no time. Standout tunes include "Drug Culture", "No Rules", "Genocide" and...damn! I like 'em all! Go buy this, and paint the band's name on your leather jacket. Be sure to surround it with tons of spikes and studs, and you will be cool like them.

-Marcus Solomon



THE UNSEEN EXPLOSION BYO RECORDS

I heard from a few friends that the new Unseen CD (this one) really sucked; but I can't really fathom that after listening to it. It's just as energetic and great as everything else The Unseen has put out to date. It contains the same powerful force as a live show does. This is fast and dangerous music. It's super street punk—super enough for me to care less about the lyrics than I usually do. Listening to this is enough to make anyone who used to be into this scene come running back, if only for a little while, because it has the thing street punk lacks: most right now: heart.

-Franny



THE VACANCY EP A-F RECORDS

Anti-Flag's Chris #2 produces this album from Pittsburgh rock band The Vacancy. While the vocalist seeming has trouble pulling it off, this group does a rowdy indie pop with a rooted, post-punk sound. The music is largely upbeat with an early '80s feel, but no keyboards. The "no keyboards" is a good thing; and there is plenty of loud, distorted guitar. This is a debut PL of seven songs from the group.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



THREE DAYS GRACE THREE DAYS GRACE JIVE

Canadian trio Three Days Grace play the alternative-metal role well, as the outfit's 12-track debut sounds like a cross between fellow countrymen Finger Eleven and current tourmates Trapt. Sanitized for mass consumption, there's nothing here that we haven't heard before from other mid-tempo, anguished rock acts in the last 10 years. However, there's probably a throng of mallcore adolescents dying to catch this sullen group of hard rocker's act. If you're of legal age, though, you've heard it all before, so feel free to pass this one by. www.jive-cords.com

-Mike SOS



THROCLUT SOLDIERS OF A BLACKENED WAR CRASH

Colorado sextet Throcut are astute students of the metal genre, as their latest, seven-track release finds the band exploring black, death, and hardcore styles, creating a vicious form of music in the process. Crushing heavy tracks like "Dark Cloud Holocaust" strike like a swift sword into your blackened heart, while the thunderous din of "Kill or Be Killed" is a foreboding homage to both At the Gates and Cradle of Filth. Implementing all of these sounds into the cauldron of metal, it's obvious that Throcut aren't merely metal fans, and that they have done their homework. Resultantly, **SOLDIERS OF A BLACKENED WAR** stands out as a metal offering that really deserves the title of "extreme." www.crashmusicinc.com

-Mike SOS



TODD WIDELL LATE NIGHT SATURDAY SELF-RELEASED

The debut release from L.A.'s newest folk sensation Todd Widell is a breezy romp of 11 catchy original tunes. While solo folk artists have made huge inroads lately on the heels of such success stories as Rhett Miller, Peter Dinklage, and Jack Johnson, you have to wonder if this trend will continue to grow or fade out like an old Neil Young tune. Though Widell's music is some of the best in this scene, he sounds more like Jack Johnson than Johnson himself. He brings on some very talented studio musicians to flush out his sound on this disc, and the results are exemplary. If you're into a mellow, acoustic vibe, this is the disc to get a hold of. Unfortunately Widell hasn't been signed to a major label yet and is selling the CD through www.cdbaby.com and www.amazon.com. You can find out more about this excellent artist at www.toddwidell.com.

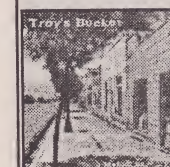
-DUG



TRANSPORT LEAGUE GRAND AMPUTATION CRASH

Transport League's six tracks of industrial-strength metal sound like a hybrid of Static X and Machine Head, as the monstrous riffs and technical prowess of both bands are evident in this Swedish quartet. Crushing grooves and rumbling rhythms are pervasive in such tracks as "Safe" and the battering "Disconnect." Massconnect, where a start-stop drumbeat is a sure-fire moshpit favorite. Transport League may not be one of the most original bands on the block, but this group is definitely one of the more dangerous. www.crashmusicinc.com

-Mike SOS



TROY'S BUCKET A TOWN OF NO ESCAPE ANXIOUS

A TOWN OF NO ESCAPE suffers from the same old disease that has long plagued its pop-punk brethren: in the frenzy and rush not to miss a beat, songs end up speeding by TOO fast and TOO smoothly—so much so that it's easy to forget them once they're over. Someone tell Troy's Bucket that the pains of being cut from the team can only be analyzed so much! However (and I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt), I'm not sure these guys would care if you informed them of such a "rule"—or any other, for that matter—as they're clearly quite happy within their bubble. It seems they believe that wanting to deliver their "message" is more important than how (and with what caliber of their craft) the message is delivered. "I spend too much time alone / Instead of speaking my mind / What a waste of time!" Fair enough.

-Davie Kaufmann



URBAN WASTE URBAN WASTE HUNGRY EYE RECORDS/MAD AT THE WORLD RECORDS

This reissue of Urban Waste's 1982 EP is eight tracks of clamorous and cathartic noise-punk that in each song reaches the heights of Circle Jerks' "Live Fast, Die Young". While this has the same loose and dramatic appeal of other seminal West Coast punk acts (e.g., Germs, WeirDOS), this is an early downtown NYC band. The hard-edged music leans toward hardcore, but it's much too spastic and trebly to be pigeonholed into that genre. This is the first legitimate CD version of this album (all previous ones being bootlegs). Hear this and know why Agnostic Front frontman Roger Mirel said, "Urban Waste is the band that got me into hardcore. I was more into punk, and then I heard Urban Waste and I was like 'Yes! I love this!'"

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



VARIOUS ARTISTS BEER: THE MOVIE TRIPLE CROWN

Sadly enough, the subject of "reality" has become a popular form of entertainment (thanks, MTV). On the heels of this comes the soundtrack to BEER: THE MOVIE, a film featuring clips taken from outtakes of various film projects from a 20-something guy from Long Island and his six friends who have a penchant for excessive drinking. Yawn. The film's musical collection is full of power-pop/punk tunes that rawk from bands like Brand New, Taking Back Sunday, and The Movielife. Double yawn. Somewhere between the Warped Tour and THE REAL WORLD, this CD is a

lot like reality: it drags on way too long (like a bad ceremony); at times borders to tears; and, like annoying errands such as grocery shopping and dentist visits, you're happy when it's over. www.triplecrown-records.com

-Mike SOS



VARIOUS ARTISTS BREEDING EVIL VOLUME 2 SADISTIC RECORDS

This is a compilation of different hardcore and punk artists with a dark outlook—hence the name of the compilation. My favorite tracks are the opening track by Reason for Being, who plays a very brutal style of hardcore. I also enjoyed the punk track by Makeoutmusic. Pick this up at www.sadisticrecords.com.

-ADF



VARIOUS ARTISTS BAD SCENE, EVERYONE'S FAULT: JAWBREAKER TRIBUTE DYING WISH RECORDS

Sadly, when Jawbreaker was together, it never really received the attention and credit that it deserved. Eventually the band broke up, and, like most great bands that slip away unnoticed, Jawbreaker began to get some exposure and respect. It's a shame that it was too little too late. You can hear Jawbreaker's influence in many of the bands in the scene today. Finally, a label has taken on the challenge of putting together a tribute album for Jawbreaker. Unlike other tribute albums that have kind of sizzled away into obscurity, Dying Wish has put together an album filled completely with previously-unreleased material; so not only does it serve its function as a great tribute album, it also serves as a necessary album for your collection. Some of the artist selections may cause fans to scratch their heads (such as Riddlin' Kids), but overall this is a very solid release. Songs to pay attention to include the Social Distortion-inspired "Boat Dreams from the Hill" by Face to Face, Sparta's infectious rendition of "Kiss the Bottle", and Nerf Herder's serious rendition of "Chesterfield King".

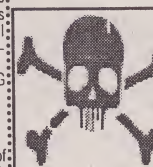
-Dane Jackson



VARIOUS ARTISTS COCK 'N' ROLL SLEAZEGRINDER

The fine folks at Sleazegrinder Records know what ingredients are needed to make a kick-ass rock comp, and they aren't bashful about putting them into the 26-track COCK 'N' ROLL collection. For starters, you need bands that will shake the foundation, and there's no shortage of that here, as bands from across the U.S. loudly proclaim their immense love for real, unsanitized rock. Standouts include the NY stomp of Bona Roba, the high-octane Hellside Strangers (whose song "Motherfuckers Don't Cry" wins the Best Song Title award here hands down), and the Chuck Berry-on-steroids flare of Big Block Hitchcock. Add in a slew of sluts in the album's artwork and a plethora of references to sex, drugs, Satan, and more sex, and you've got a surefire party starting CD. (Ball bond sold separately.) www.sleazegrinder.com

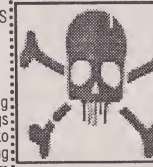
-Mike SOS



VARIOUS ARTISTS GSL #50: OUR BIRTHDAY YOUR PRESENT GOLD STANDARD LABS

Everyone's favorite taste-making San Diego imprint celebrates its 50th release with a rock-'em sock-'em comp that proudly showcases their stable of once and future spazzcore stallions. The usual suspects show up here (most with exclusive material) to pay their regards to the label that helped them pay their rent: The Locust (the squelchy digital barf of "Perks of Believing in Round Squares (v.2)"), The Mars Volta (the ass-whomping seven-minute freak-out "Ambulet"), and Pattern (the prog-oriented "Abigail"). Though the big guns are the main attraction, it's the lesser-known acts that really inflict the heavy damage. JR Ewing's "Repetition is Failure" is a punch to the face that you'll want to relive over and over again, and Neon King Kong's shit-bottom take on Redd Kross' "Annette's Got the Hits" is one of the best things you'll hear...ever.

-Jason Jett



VARIOUS ARTISTS HOME ON THE RANGE, VOL. 2 THE BINGO LADY RECORD COLLECTIVE/ELEVEN:11

This is a compilation of indie rock from pop to the hard stuff. As usual, the mixture of styles is going to resonate as a mixture of quality in the ear of the listener. Also as usual, there are high points that are worth exploring, bands one would want to hear more of. The collection starts out with the sweet confection of song-oriented indie pop. 1090CLUB's "Son of Two Minute Pop Song" is just that. The female-led Hypocrite Like Me offers "Trainwreck", a ska-like ballad that recalls The Skatalites and Tricia & The Supersonics MISS JAMAICA MEETS THE SKATALITES (Moon Ska). From such very safe fare, this album veers into challenging, experimental sounds that I find very intriguing: Looptan Zu's "Charged Oubi-Patients", PCRV's "What Makes you Smile Will Ultimately Kill You", and Spurge's "Tenitis".

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

music that rocks is better than great sex.



GARRISON
THE SILHOUETTE
REVELATION RECORDS
Garrison has a really big sound, although I found that it just droned on and on. A big, boring drone works for a lot of bands, but this just didn't do it for me. However, the first song on THE SILHOUETTE, "Come on Die (No Seriously)", is probably one of the best songs ever! Buying the whole album is worth it for that song alone.
-chad



GIVING CHASE
NOTHING EVER CHANGES
JUMP START
Hey, this is a good band! This reminds me of Give Up the Ghost, only a little more musical and less hardcore. The only minor complaint I have about this CD is that they seem to be musically ambivalent, to the point that sometimes there is singing without any clear music in the background. Don't yell at me or anything: I'm not talking about parts of songs where this is done for effect, I'm talking about it being out of the blue. The overall musical style here is also ambivalent. There is a pop-punk song which is followed directly by a hardcore-sounding song. Giving Chase is a good band...but confusing!
-Franny



GRAVELTRAP
CONCRETE + UDDER CHAOS
MOON SKA EUROPE
I was always a big fan of Moon Ska before it closed up shop, so when this album from Moon Ska Europe came with my review packet, I thought I was going to get to hear an up-and-coming European ska band. Unfortunately, Graveltrap is the farthest thing from ska. The band is just a run-of-the-mill pop-punk band. The choruses are catchy, the music will make you bob your head, and the songs are filled with plenty of "whoa"s. That's right, Graveltrap employs every single pop-punk staple and instead of offering up something innovative.
If you like your punk poppy and generic, then you'll love Graveltrap.
-Dane Jackson



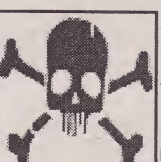
HAMARTIA
TO PLAY THE PART
GOODLIFE
Connecticut is home to the masters of metalcore, Hatebreed, yet there are a few more bands that have the penchant for blending hardcore and metal, too. Take Hamartia, for example, who have since broken up but have a posthumous release in the bins titled TO PLAY THE PART. Hailing from the state known for insurance and home base of the WWE, Hamartia's hammering guitars and screams from the depths of hell fit right in amongst the metalcore mongers of today. It's a shame that Hamartia didn't stay together, but the band did spawn acts such as With Resistance, Bury Your Dead, and Misery Signal, so its pummeling spirit still lives on.
www.goodliferecordings.com
-Mike SOS



HAPPY CAMPERS
S/T
MONKEY ASS RECORDS
From the album's packaging and liner notes, I thought Happy Campers would be a silly joke band. The band proved me wrong from the beginning of the first track, "Wave the Flags". While the guys in the band have a sense of humor, when they want to sing some socially-relevant punk rock, they're able to. It's safe to say that the songs on this self-titled disc focus on the ideals of life, love, and liberty. While most bands have of late tried to completely bog down their music with politics, Happy Campers keep a nice variety going so that things don't get stale. The best song on the album is "Fair Weather Father", which boasts a very hypnotic opening and a very pounding melody. These guys share many musical similarities with Bad Religion—and that's a good thing.
-Dane Jackson



HEDFIRST
HEDFIRST
CRASH
Polish metal outfit Hedfirst combine the best of Sepultura, Entombed, and Carcass for its metallic crunch, as the seven tracks that comprise this eponymous release utilize churning guitars and guttural vocals to the fullest. The end result may sound a bit derivative, yet it packs a certain low-end punch that many other bands have seemingly ignored as of late. If you dig a lot of growl in your metal, Hedfirst have released an album for your consumption:
www.crashmusicinc.com
-Mike SOS



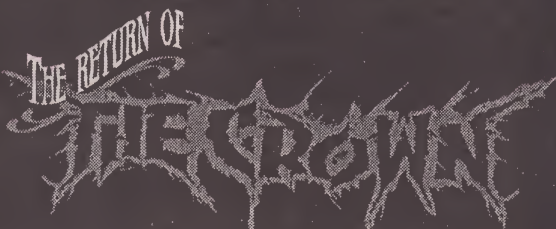
HENRY KRINKLE
THE BLOOMBERG SUCKS EP
SELF-RELEASED CD
Henry Krinkle's disdain for the mayor of NYC is obvious by the title of the outfit's two-song sampler, yet dissing the powers-that-be is about the harshest the band gets. Instead, think dreamy, guitar-led alternative rock with undertones of Brit pop, Williamsburg sheik, and a touch of emo when getting a grasp on this Metro-area based band. Henry Krinkle's lazy Saturday afternoon approach is laden with melody and is perfect for the slacker in all of us. www.henrykrinkle.com
-Mike SOS



JABE
DRAMA CITY
SELF-RELEASED
The third full-length release from Boston's brilliant Irish folk tunesmith Jabe Beyer is a two-CD set that bridges Dylan, Tom Waits, and Springsteen to the acoustic energy of the Emerald Isle. With 13 original songs on one disc and three live videos and three MP3 tunes on the other, Beyer has created. The music on this disc is a fast-paced cross of alternative country and bluegrass on speed. Beyer is simply one of the best songwriters in America. His lyrics are a heart-wrenching cry from the far end of a smoky bar. Choruses like "I made 24 dollars tonight at the local watering hole / I'm gonna leave this bar, get right in my car, and drive right into a wall" are the type of hard-nosed poetry that dominates this album. There are some excellent slow ballads on this release, on which Beyer's voice sounds eerily like Springsteen. We can only hope that Jabe never makes more than \$24 a night and that the band stays mean and hungry, never plays for a major label, and continues to make art like this for years to come. www.jabe.net
-DUG

www.skratchmagazine.com

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this is what some people had to say, ok?



DIO
STAND UP AND SHOUT: THE DIO ANTHOLOGY
RHINO RECORDS

If you haven't heard of Ronnie James Dio, for God's sake crawl out of your hole and listen to some metal once in a while. But for the 99% of the music world that knows his manic legacy and trademark screams, this is a nice compilation of early and recent material. The two-disc set contains material all the way back to Dio's early days with Elf, through Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, Black Sabbath, and his solo material. Some of the earliest material with Elf sounds dated and somewhat tame next to the well-produced radio staples from Rainbow and Sabbath, but it is interesting to hear his progression as a lead singer. Included are even a couple of nice live Sabbath tunes from the early '80s. Rhino Records has a penchant for releasing compilations of work by legendary performers, so perhaps the most interesting thing about this set is that Dio has now crossed into the 'legendary' status before his predecessor with Sabbath, Ozzy Osbourne.

-DUG



DOWN BY LAW
WINDWARDTIDESANDWAYWARDSAILS
UNION LABEL GROUP

Down By Law has been around long enough to build its own core group of fans, and for those fans, WINDWARDTIDESANDWAYWARDSAILS will sound like more of the same. There's nothing groundbreaking on this album, but if you're a Down By Law fan, then you'll definitely like it. While the album seems cliched and predictable at times (especially with tracks like "Put the Boots In"), this is a very listenable punk album. It won't blow your mind with originality, but it serves its purpose. The songs will make you think. They're catchy enough to learn and sing along to...and, of course, anthemic, fist-raising choruses are used when you'd expect them to be used. Besides, it's trendy to hate your government right now. If you can hold out for a better album, wait for the new Pennywise; if not, Down By Law will serve as an adequate replacement.

-Dane Jackson



DRESSY BESSY
DRESSY BESSY
KINDERCORE RECORDS

This is a fun album of summer fun. The vocals from Tammy Ealom and charming, smiling lyrics of power-pop fun are like an '80s summer, but the fuzzed guitars is a '60s AM. This is the delicate but bouncy midpoint between Sleater-Kinney and Davie Allan. There is a warm restraint to the music, which buzzes along with girl power-pop, offering catchy choruses with a wink and nothing ostentatious.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



DYF
S/T
JLS PRODUCTIONS

This thing was shrink-wrapped to all hell, and I was so tired I could barely get the wrapping off. So already things didn't bode well for DYF here. However, my shrink-wrapping bias and my bad mood are not the hidden reasons why this isn't good. There are no hidden reasons: it's just not good. I have no idea why people still form bands that sound like this. It's like making a new oven mitt. Why? The old one was just as good. The Deviates (although DYF is much less melodic) and Epitaph in general can handle this sound just fine. What happened

to innovation?

-Franny



ELAD LOVE AFFAIR
A WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO A GUN AND IT STABS HER
IMMIGRANT SUN RECORDS

My high school marching band had more passion and talent. Ouch! I'm cruel, I know...but not as cruel as having to listen to this album.

-chad



EL CENTRO
PROHIBIDO
FINGER RECORDS

This is definitely not my cup of tea. I'd liken it to a bad No Use for a Name record. Oh wait! No Use for a Name only puts out bad records. Pop-punk is the vermin of all music, a bastard child of a bastard genre. Like the movie classic MULTIPLICITY, a replication of another replication could only result in a hopelessly retarded form of life. A helpful tip for the guitar player: please stop raking the fretboard. I already know you're good. And your singer needs to stop his second-rate Mike Ness impersonation. If you can't play ska, don't do it!

Sheesh!

-Miss Namella Kim



EMBRACE TODAY
SOLDIERS
DEATHWISH

Embrace Today returns with soapbox in tow on SOLDIERS, a 15-track condemnation of a crooked lifestyle. This straight-edge quintet provides quite the musical background to express its viewpoint, as the seething instrumental performance hits incredibly hard—and may even leave scars. When it comes to lyrics, though, it seems as if the band is going around in circles, either stoically defending its lifestyle choice or downright criticizing those who follow a different path. Despite the musical firepower that SOLDIERS contains, it seems as if the message the band conveys trips Embrace Today up a bit, making the outfit nothing more a virtual scream Sunday-school sermon laced with profanities. www.deathwishinc.com

-Mike SOS



ENGINE ANIMAL PEOPLE
ORCHESTRA FOR THE LIVING
PSEUDO MADHOUSE RECORDS

This mysterious and intriguing funk/electronica release is a strange voyage into a new genre. With a female vocalist who bells out tunes with the gusto and command of Janis Joplin and songs that often sound like '80s rock and then veer wildly into synthesized melodies, this is unlike anything else in the music scene today. The group is associated with Halucinatti 22 Music, Billy Squire's bizarre, offbeat, and surreal production group in Hollywood. Unfortunately, there was no bio for this group, no Website, and no information on the CD cover. Perhaps it is just as well, for when you take the music at face value, it works wonderfully. All the bizarre trappings are associated with H22 Music could only detract from a well-crafted, terrific piece of work.

-DUG

www.skratchmagazine.com

it's all music, man. it makes the world....



COMETS ON FIRE
COMETS ON FIRE
ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

This is a wild ride of reckless abandon that recalls early Bulthole Surfers albums. This Santa Cruz band would have been on the early RAT MUSIC FOR RAT PEOPLE compilations with groups like The Surfers and Big Boys. The cathartic, psychedelic rock freak out also recalls the early, heavy Sub Pop sonic damage (like Lubricated Goat and the Blue Cheer-inspired Mudhoney). This is a CD reissue of the group's first LP plus six bonus tracks.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



COOKER
SINCE 2001
WEEDLINE RECORDS

This release is filled with formulaic, three-chord punk-rock music with tons of breaks, stops, and fills. The lead singer has a good voice, but his vocals are drowned out by the drums in the mix. Oh, well, this band is still relatively new. Once they refine a few key elements—mainly production value and repetition—they'll be hard to stop. Tracks like "Catch Me", "Candle", and "Ballad of Caesar" show how much potential Cooker actually has. The band sounds much better live than they do on the studio tracks, so they have half the battle won already.

The live tracks make me want to see this band. Get this album so you can get some scenerio points because I expect big things to come from Cooker if they get the shot they deserve.

-Dane Jackson



CRITERIA
EN GARDE
INITIAL

At 24, Stephen Pederson is a busy young man, as he has been a powerful force in the world of indie rock for the past eight years. Want proof? He's fronted Cursive, been part of The White Octave, and now stands on his own with Criteria. This 10-track endeavor, described as "massive-anthem-power-pop-riff-rock," is basically just that—with snippets of clever lyrics thrown in for good measure and a total nice-guy rock band appeal stamped all over each song. If you like Hum, Weezer, or any indie band that has invaded the airwaves as of late, chances are you'll dig Criteria's humble yet rocking EN GARDE. www.initialrecords.com

-Mike SOS



CRYPTOPSY
NONE SO LIVE
CENTURY MEDIA

The dastardly Canadian death-metal troupe Cryptopsy have undergone three vocalist changes in the group's decade-long career, but this setback hasn't slowed the purveyors of carnage down one bit. The latest 12 tracks from the quintet were recorded live in Montreal, and with a hometown crowd behind the brutal band, you can literally feel the sweat and smell the stench of death-metal people thrashing about. For fans of the band, this release is as good as going to the gig and experiencing its entire breakneck splendor in person. www.centurymedia.com

www.centurymedia.com

-Mike SOS



CUT-OUT
SELF-TITLED
SELF-RELEASED

The debut demo EP from Puddle of Mudd co-founder and guitarist Jimmy Allen's new band is a healthy taste of hard-driving melodic rock that smokes from the very first note. When he was with Puddle of Mudd, Allen won the 2002 ASCAP Song of the Year award for writing "Blurry". His songwriting talents will be sorely missed in his old band and greatly appreciated in his new one. Allen's drafted ex-Puddle of Mudd bassist Troy McCoy, drummer Phillip Bailey (from the band Systematic), and guitarist Brian Harrah (from Professional Murder Music) to form his new supergroup. All four songs on the demo are blistering rockers that establish the new band as one of the best new hard-rock bands in the L.A. scene. If rock like this doesn't whet your appetite, you're already dead. www.cutoutband.com

Music) to form his new supergroup. All four songs on the demo are blistering rockers that establish the new band as one of the best new hard-rock bands in the L.A. scene. If rock like this doesn't whet your appetite, you're already dead. www.cutoutband.com

-DUG



DAY OF CONTEMPT
SEE THROUGH THE LIES
GOODLIFE RECORDINGS

Our friends in Europe have released another hardcore gem. Day of Contempt plays brutal breakdown after brutal breakdown without losing their sense of melody. Think Hatebreed meets Poison the Well. This album managed to keep me interested the entire way. Check the band out if you get the chance.

-ADF



DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR
TAKING IT BACK
SPOOK CITY RECORDS

Boston's Nourish the Flame is a Cookie Monster band of a metal/hardcore blend with shades of grindcore. Nourish the Flame takes the first half of this split-CD, and each band has an intro and outro to their halves. It is the instrumental intro from Death Before Dishonor immediately following the outro from Nourish the Flame that is the high point of the album. Death Before Dishonor has less tortured vocals and does group vocals, but this vocal style in general has been done so many times before that the long instrumental passage of the two tracks back to back becomes the most interesting part.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



DEEDS OF FLESH
REDUCED TO ASHES
UNIQUE LEADER

California death-metalers Deeds of Flesh return with their fifth offering, a technically sound, pulverizing display of eight-tracks of rapid-fire remorselessness. There's plenty to bang one's head to here, as the beats-per-minute meter is pushed to the maximum on REDUCED TO ASHES. Pummeling guitars give way to interludes of instrumentation that are both heavy and intricate, making Deeds of Flesh one of the more well-rounded death-metal acts on the scene today. www.uniqueleader.com

-Mike SOS

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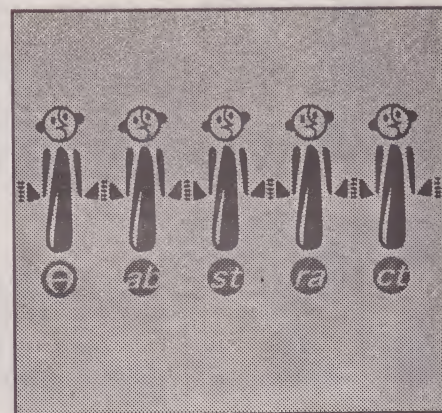
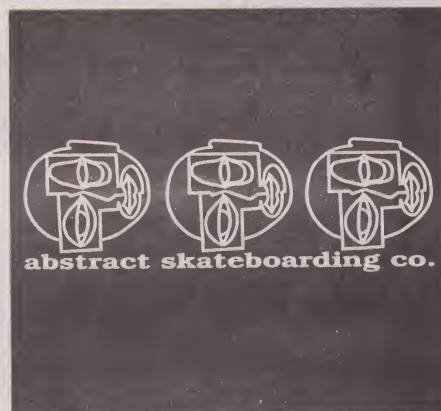
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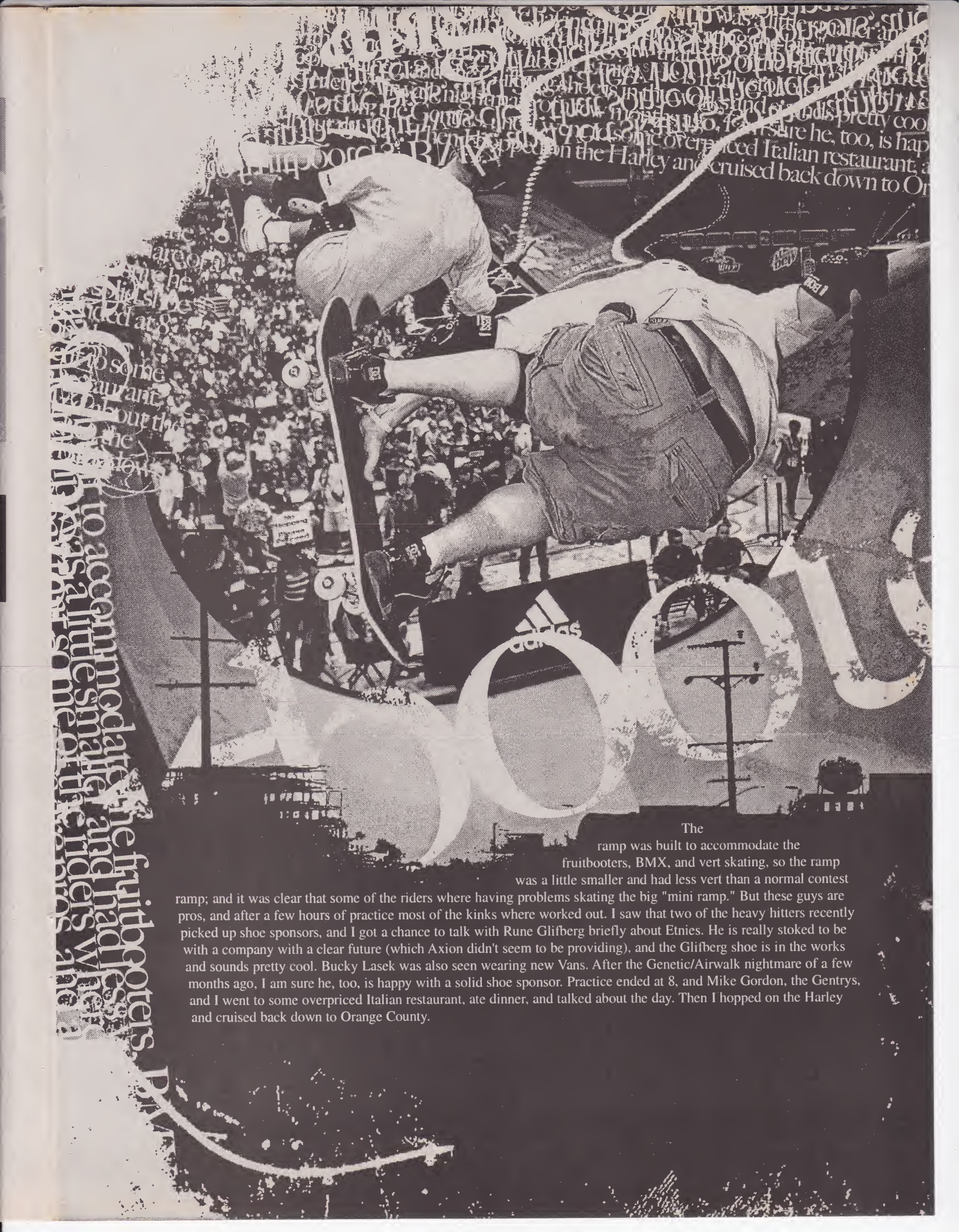
X GAMES 2003

skate section photos & stories
by Louie Bar/sk8shop.com

I arrived over at the Gentrys at about 1 to cruise up with them to the vert practice. Chris has a new ring from his sponsor Silver Star, and he hooked me up with one of those, which was pretty dope. After catching up a little, we hopped on the freeway and headed for the Staples Center. We arrived there at about 3 p.m. and went to their hotel, the Figueroa Hotel, which is located right across the street from the street course. We got those guys checked in and got a parking pass for me so I can come and go, then headed over to the athlete check-in tent. The usual politics went down, but after 15 minutes of conversation I was able to get an extra team-manager pass, which gives you all access to the event. There was heightened security: they had metal detectors to screen everyone entering the venue, then once again when you entered the main arena. When you start to walk around, you get the feeling of being at a carnival with an action-sports twist.




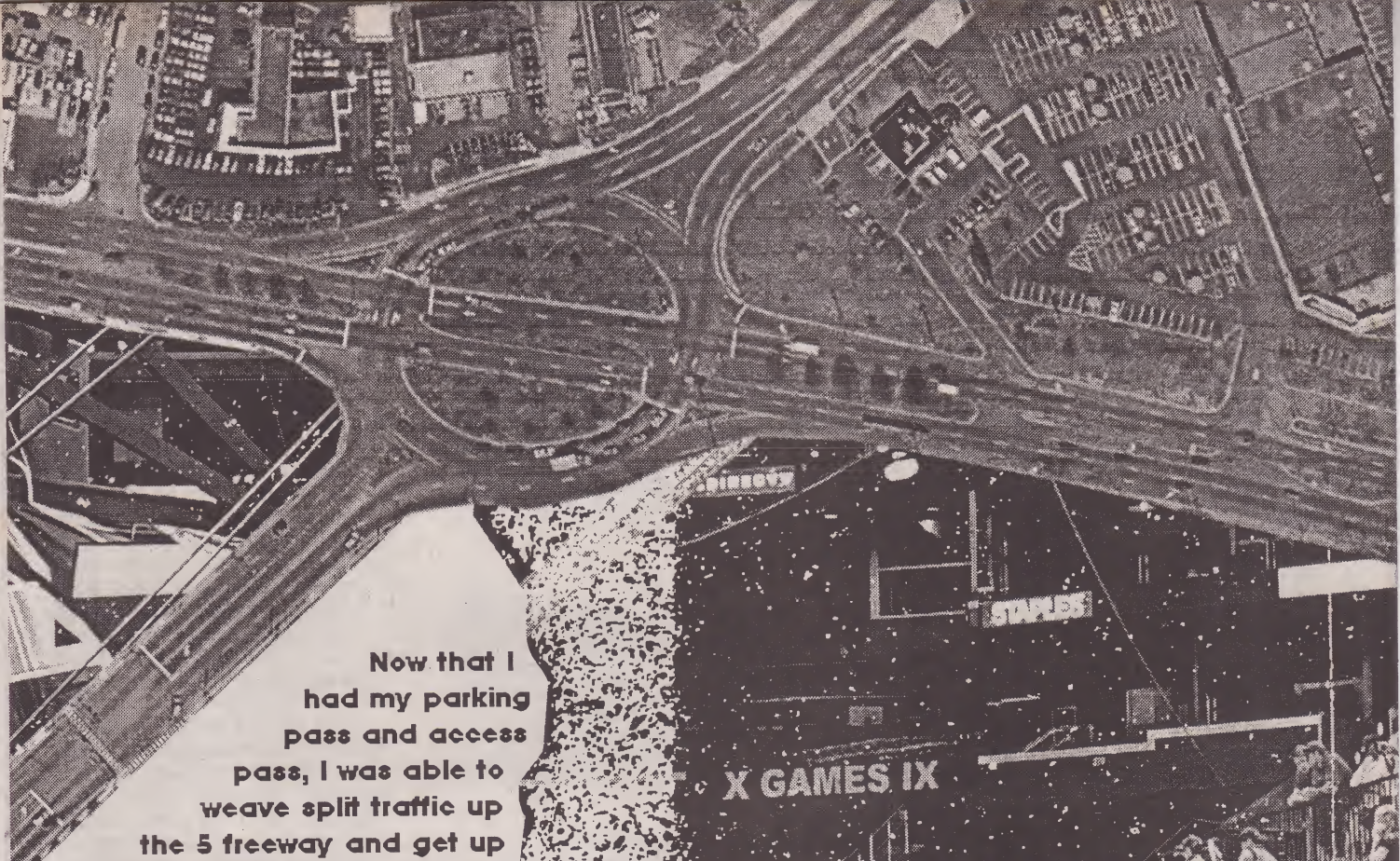
At this point we headed over to the vert ramp, and the session was already going pretty strong. The vert ramp is about 100 feet long (taking up about 65% of the Staples Center floor) and is all air conditioned. I couldn't have asked for a better set-up no sunscreen required! I was actually considering getting my sweatshirt because it was so cold in there. Anyway, the guys were stoked. It must be way better for them skating inside vs. sweating their asses off in the baking sun. The street course didn't have the same luxuries outside of Staples Center. I have been lagging on going to contests this year (the only other one was the Tampa Am in January), so it was cool to get in that environment again.



The ramp was built to accommodate the fruitbooters, BMX, and vert skating, so the ramp was a little smaller and had less vert than a normal contest ramp; and it was clear that some of the riders were having problems skating the big "mini ramp." But these guys are pros, and after a few hours of practice most of the kinks were worked out. I saw that two of the heavy hitters recently picked up shoe sponsors, and I got a chance to talk with Rune Glifberg briefly about Etnies. He is really stoked to be with a company with a clear future (which Axion didn't seem to be providing), and the Glifberg shoe is in the works and sounds pretty cool. Bucky Lasek was also seen wearing new Vans. After the Genetic/Airwalk nightmare of a few months ago, I am sure he, too, is happy with a solid shoe sponsor. Practice ended at 8, and Mike Gordon, the Gentrys, and I went to some overpriced Italian restaurant, ate dinner, and talked about the day. Then I hopped on the Harley and cruised back down to Orange County.

**FUCK
SKATEBOARDING**

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Now that I had my parking pass and access pass, I was able to weave split traffic up the 5 freeway and get up to the vert ramp in a timely manner. I think it took an hour from leaving work to getting on the ramp, which wasn't bad at all. The crowd was a lot bigger for the vert semifinals, and I finally found a spot to camp out behind the extension. The normal heavy hitters—Bob, Andy, Bucky, and Rune—ended up in the top at the end of the day. Shaun White came out swinging and also made it in the top 10, along with Chris Gentry, Sandro Diaz, and Pierre Luc Gagnon. I took a brief break from the action on the vert ramp and wandered over to the street course, where I found a few guys practicing, including Eric Koston, Ryan Sheckler, Carlos De Andrade, Austen Seaholm, Daniel Viera, and Rodil Jr.



The park course that they set up for this year's competition was a bit different than in years past. They covered the entire asphalt that the course was set up on with skatelite. Since the temperature was expected to be about 90-95 degrees the whole weekend, the hotter temperatures wouldn't affect the asphalt (and, consequently, the skaters' runs). The first thing we noticed with the course was the use of pool coping and cement. It provided an unique look and feel to a course that in years past has been very predictable. I was able to get some pictures out there. I

was feeling for these guys, because it was hot as shit outside! Sheckler was putting together a pretty good run that involved the whole course (with the exception of the bowled pool coping corner). Koston was throwing down his normal assortment of tech moves, and it was kind of funny, because there was a huge ad of him that took up the whole Figueroa Hotel in the background. After this, I cruised back in and finished up the vert prelims, then headed up to the press room, which was at the very top of Staples Center. I cruised up

with Enrico Pavia from THRESHOLD MAGAZINE, and we shot the shit for awhile, got some cool business card holders, and then decided it was time to head out for some grub.

This time the dinner crowd grew: it was Chris and Ricca Gentry, Mathias Ringstrom, Pierre Luc Gagnon, myself, and a few others. We enjoyed some more \$45-a-plate food and had some good laughs.

Pierre Luc told me a story about when he was on his way to the Denmark contest a month ago and got kicked off the plane. Apparently, he was using his cell phone before the plane was getting ready to leave the gate, and the flight attendant told him to turn it off.

He then took out his sidekick and did some text messaging, when the plane started moving back towards the gate.

Some security came on along with the flight attendant and told Pierre Luc to leave the plane. They kicked him off, and he missed the Denmark contest. Moral of the story: don't use electronic devices on the plane when they tell you not to, or they will give you the boot! Well, the night was getting pretty long, and it was time to make the drive back to Orange County, so I told everybody goodbye and was off once again.

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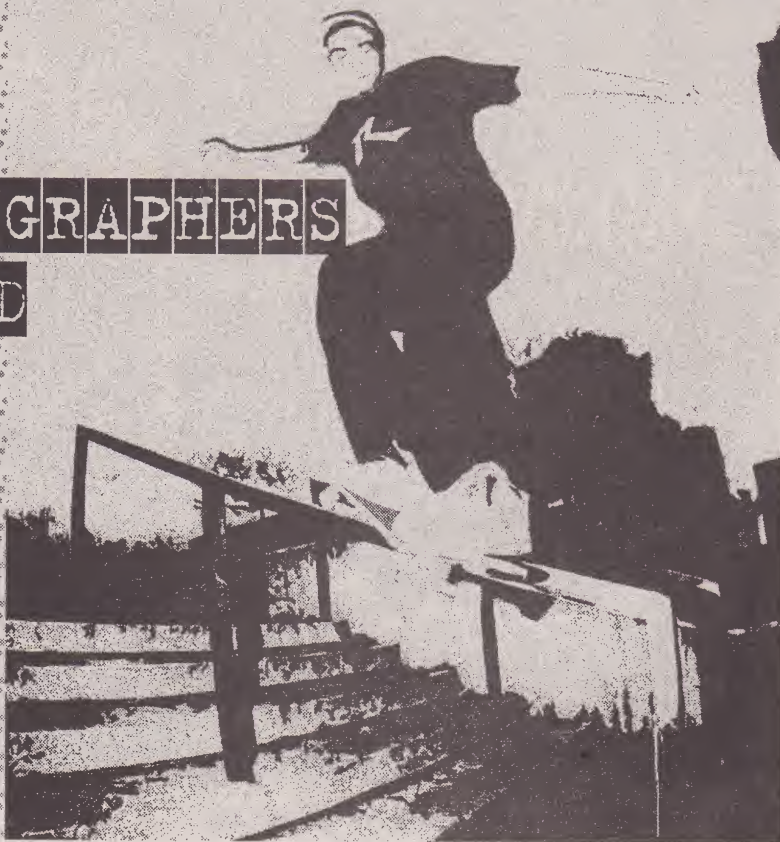
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The vert finals were insane! Bucky Lasek emerged victorious. Bucky's score of 94.67 stood strong through two consecutive runs of fierce challenges from silver medalist Andy Macdonald and bronze medalist Rune Glifberg. Coming off a first-place victory at this year's X Games Global Championship in San Antonio, Bucky staked his claim to first-place honors during his second run, in which he nailed a massive combo that began with a frontside rodeo and ended in a heelflip to gay twist. Bucky said, "After 19 years of skating, to still be progressing is a great feeling. I wasn't expecting to win." Two-time X Games Skateboard vert gold medalist Andy Macdonald claimed second place with a score of 92.67. Andy earned his silver by completing five successful 540s in the final run, landing the last 540 backwards. "All the competitors are great," Andy commented. "I wouldn't want to be a judge. We are all in this together." Rune Glifberg took the bronze, posting a 92.33 in his final run—only fractions of a point behind Andy. Glifberg's final run included a frontside heelflip, alley-oop 540 to a McTwist, capped off with a nosegrab switch kickflip. Last year's gold medalist Pierre-Luc Gagnon placed fifth. Making his professional skateboarding debut, 16-year-old Shaun White placed sixth. We think that Shaun got robbed. His runs included 720s. When his score of 89.67 was announced, the entire crowd booed. We finished up the night by mistakenly heading down Sunset Blvd. for the Familie Partie at the Key Club. We arrived pretty late and it was shut down before I could power down five rum and cokes. I had a good time hanging out with Dave Duncan at the Key Club. That guy knows how to throw it down, for sure! We hopped back in the car, and somehow it was like 4 a.m. when we got back to the Figueroa. I decided it was time to take a few days of rest at this point, and my Xgames Xperience was over.

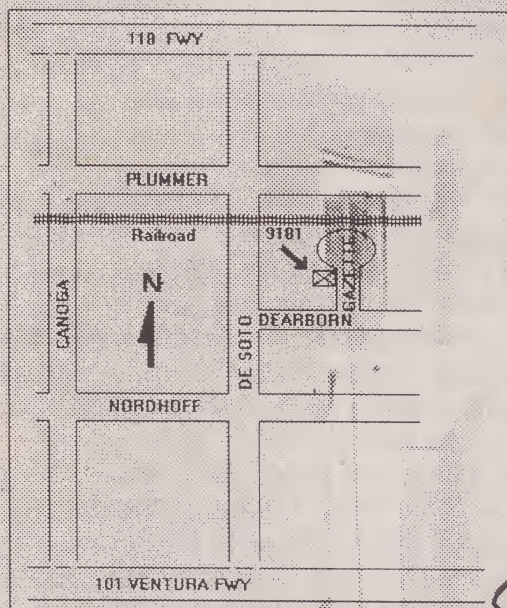


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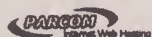
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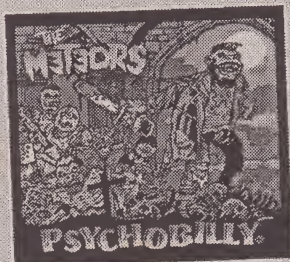
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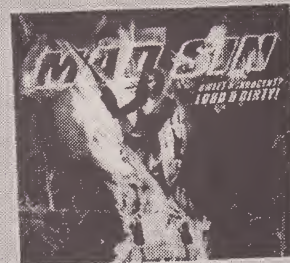
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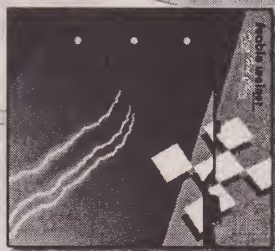
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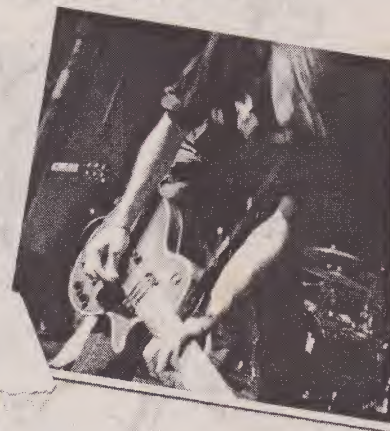
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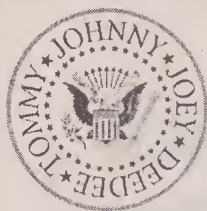
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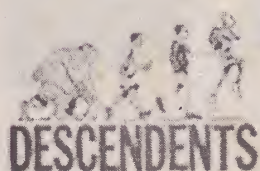
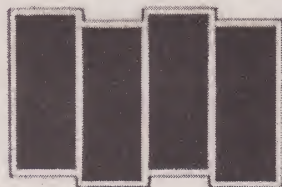
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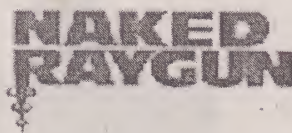
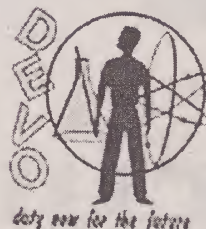
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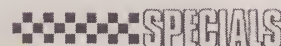
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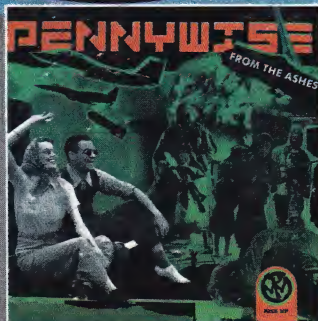


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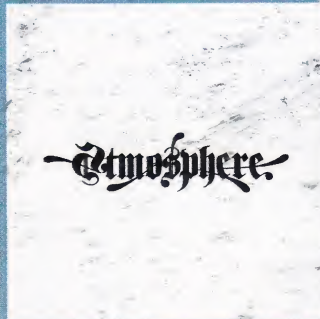
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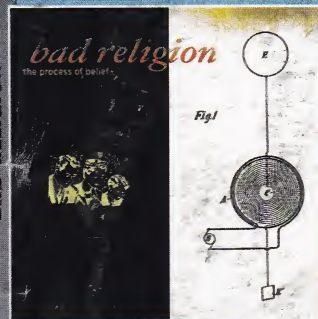
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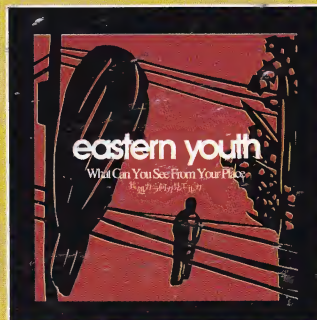
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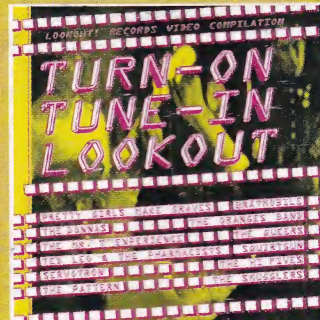
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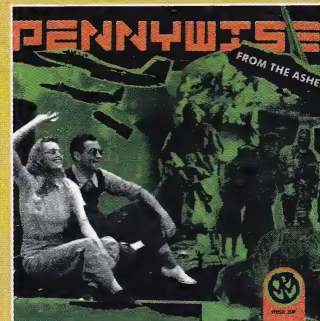
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